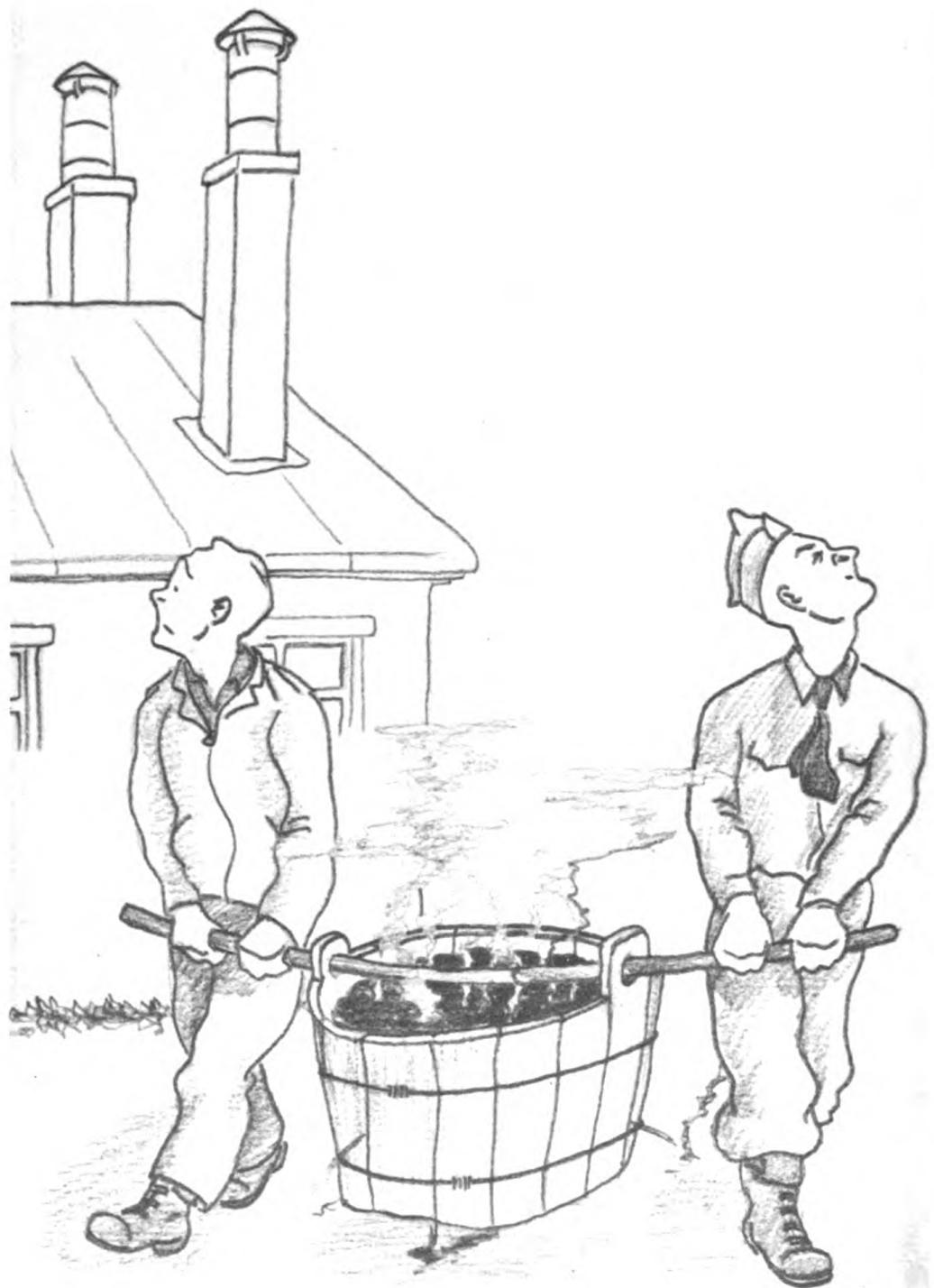


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Diary of a Kriegie



Ed Beattie

Diary of a Kriegie

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"Greedy to Pass"

Thomas Y. Crowell Company
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To My Father

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FOREWORD

THIS is not a diary in the usual sense of the word. It couldn't be. Nobody in his right mind would put down on paper, in a prison camp, all his thoughts on National Socialism, on his treatment by the guards, or on the activities of prisoners inside the camp. Any diary ever kept in camp is constantly subject to confiscation, and indiscretions might have disagreeable consequences.

When I started this diary in Chaumont-sur-Marne I determined to make it as complete as possible as far as daily detail was concerned, including as many hints as I could which would recall incidents, trains of thought, and so on. Often a few innocent-looking words are enough to recreate an event or a mood. Conversations, in general, I reproduced verbatim as soon as possible after they had taken place. A few conversations, however, were also better left as hints.

The "hint system" worked pretty well. A correspondent inevitably develops an ability to retain all sorts of detail in his head, even if he doesn't possess one of those fabulous "photographic" memories. In my case, the job was made the easier by the fact that a prisoner's existence is so dull that even minor events take on tremendous importance at the time and impress themselves deeply on the mind.

I was very lucky, at that, to retain the original diary through my eight months as a prisoner of the Germans. The first two times it was confiscated, both within a few weeks of my capture, it contained little material which was dangerous. Each time it was read by a German who was well-disposed toward me and uninterested in small side-swipes at the Nazis. By the third time it was taken from me, this time for two months, I had begun taking many more liberties. I don't think I ever would have gotten it back except for the chaos which reigned in Germany in the weeks before the final surrender. My own suspicion is that each of the two camps involved left the censorship to the other.

There are a good many thousand articulate "kriegies" who know much more than I do about conditions inside camp. I never reached a

permanent officers' camp with adequate facilities, where life was much better than it ever was in the series of pens in which I was kept. But I think my own experiences, recorded here, do give a picture of the indifference to the welfare of prisoners which was the worst feature of the Nazi prison camp system, and to the frequent thievery and deceit which were so infuriating to men in no position to combat them.

Due to a combination of circumstances, including my command of German and an intimate knowledge of the country and the Nazi system, I was able consistently to talk to Germans, to watch their life, and in particular, to trace their train of thought during the months when desperate hopes finally died out and the stubbornness of a few leaders turned defeat into national catastrophe. If there is any lasting value in a book written so soon after the collapse of a great nation, it will lie here in the incomplete picture given of Germany in the throes.

E. W. B., JR.

Gatineau, July, 1945

Chaumont-sur-Marne
SEPTEMBER 12, 1944

THIS first entry in what promises to be a pretty dismal diary is being written by the light of one small candle in an old French barracks. We are behind bars, and unless Providence or Georgie Patton does something about it soon (we are inclined at the moment to look to the latter) we are in for a considerable period behind them.

John Mecklin of the *Chicago Sun* and I, and Jimmy Schwab, who was the driver of a jeep named "June" until a certain unfortunate incident around 1:00 P.M. today, have just been locked up with three GI's whose jeep fell into the same German trap which nabbed us. They are particularly disgusted because their regiment, dug in somewhere north of here, has been promised steaks for dinner tonight for the first time since the great sweep across France reached its full momentum.

I expect army "K" rations, on which everyone around the front seems to live, will taste very good indeed in retrospect, about three weeks from now when we have had a chance to get hungry—always excepting the possibility that we are retaken, in which case we'll probably be damning them with the usual lack of restraint.

Our supper tonight consists of sawdusty brown bread, a chunk of margarine, some very dry swiss cheese and some *ersatz* coffee so bad that it should be grounds enough in itself for the Germans to give up the unequal battle. I imagine *ersatz* coffee will be the subject of other and fuller dissertations as this diary progresses. The six of us, at any rate, are still too full tonight of American grub to enjoy the supper much, and most of it is going to be left for the German guards, who no doubt will know what to do with it.

Wright Bryan, Managing Editor of the *Atlanta Journal*, and front broadcaster for N.B.C., is about a mile away in a hospital where a German doctor extracted a bullet from his leg this afternoon. Wright was the only casualty in our jeep, which is remarkable in view of the small

arms barrage the Germans laid down on us during the fifteen minutes or so we lay underneath wondering what to do next. Three companions of my cell-mates this evening were wounded as the six occupants of their jeep tried crawling out of danger down a ditch.

Wright seems perfectly comfortable except for the fact that he is considerably too long for the six-foot bed into which he has been put, and must keep himself corkscrewed in order to fit. He is the center of an admiring circle of French civilian patients, who apparently accept the fact that three American correspondents have been captured as earnest that the fighting troops can't be far behind.

The Germans reacted somewhat differently this afternoon. At least half a dozen asked what in the devil correspondents were doing in advance of the army and I assured them it was strictly unintentional. The colonel commanding here was flabbergasted enough to remark "I thought we had someone." I made no reply because it didn't strike me as the time for repartee.

There is not much doubt that if we could only get out of the Germans' sight for as much as five minutes we could find hide-outs in almost any house in town. With the Americans as close as they are—they can't be more than five miles away—the French civilians have been smiling and waving to us all afternoon, and apparently don't care whether the Germans notice it or not. Chaumont was General Pershing's headquarters in the last war, and Americans still seem to be popular here.

Wright will be perfectly all right as long as his wound is given complete quiet, and the German doctor promised me, last thing, when we were permitted to visit the hospital en route to the hoosegow, that when the Germans evacuate Chaumont—they expect to clear out as soon as the Americans get around to coming this way a day or two hence—he will be left behind as a noncombatant.

When the Germans turned us into this little room with a few blankets and some old mattresses they found the door would not lock from the outside and began banging on the lock with bayonet butts and damning the French for producing inferior material. I suggested to the *feldwebel* in charge of the guard that since it was a ground-floor room with a perfectly good window opening onto the parade ground, he should let me lock the door from the inside and hand the key to him out the window. He looked at me as though any such procedure would undermine the entire German *Wehrmacht* and insisted on having the lock repaired instead.

It was a bad audience reaction to my first feeble efforts at a joke. I

haven't felt much like joking all afternoon, and the more I think of the mess we have landed in, the less hilarious I become. Being taken prisoner is a terrific nervous shock, in the first place because it involves extreme personal danger during the minutes before the enemy decides to take you instead of keep shooting at you, and in the second place because you suddenly realize that by passing from the right side of the front to the wrong you have become a nonentity in the huge business of war. A general taken prisoner is to all intents and purposes just as empty a zero as a private.

We were captured because, like a good many hundred others in this fantastic Battle of France, we approached a town thinking it was American-held only to find a weak but determined German rearguard hanging on until the inevitable moment when the pressure should become too great and another retreat be sounded.

This campaign has gone much too quickly for everyone always to know where the Germans are, for roads to be properly blocked off if they lead into enemy territory. Individuals suffer, but the Germans suffer more than anyone else because they have been pushed around so thoroughly that they often have no idea whatever of the local situation, let alone the general. For what consolation it's worth, a German corps commander was picked up a few days ago riding innocently in his staff car in the middle of a British column near the Seine: with the dust and confusion, he had taken it for German. And a German division was wiped out north of Paris by an American outfit which discovered the Germans marching to "safety" up the road it had just taken itself. The Americans just deployed to either side and waited for the Germans to arrive.

We had no intention today of getting anywhere near the front, or of contacting any German who was mad at anyone whatever. In fact, we were en route to Chatillon-sur-Seine to watch the surrender of 20,000 Germans who had been held at bay for days by a little mixed force of Americans and French on the wide-open left flank of the Third Army, and who finally had gotten tired of being beaten up by the American Ninth Airforce every time they tried to form up for attack or retreat into Germany. Chaumont was on the way, and we thought the Americans already held it. They didn't.

Two miles before we hit the German road block we had passed a bridge where two men with the armbands of the famous French F.F.I. stood guard with rifles. One of them made a tentative motion at us. We have been arguing this afternoon whether in fact they were collaborationists acting as outposts for the Germans. John Mecklin leads

the school convinced of this. Personally, I can't see the German army using Frenchmen as its skirmish line, and suspect the Frenchmen, seeing us wave gaily as we passed, decided we were off to scout the Germans near Chaumont and that a bigger force would be following behind. It might be stated here that any resemblance between three correspondents and an offensive patrol is purely accidental.

If the jeep had not been hauling a trailer loaded with bedding and food, we might have been able to turn around when we first saw the roadblock. It barred a typical straight, tree-lined French road in a countryside as peaceful as Arcadia. We suspected nothing until we reached a stretch where the road was littered with small branches snipped off the trees by gunfire. The leaves were still green on them. Then we saw the road-block and the two burned-out jeeps which meant others had been caught before us.

One of us shouted, "turn around quick," or maybe we all shouted together. Jimmy began a frantic effort to swing the trailer back across the road and at the same time to keep it clear of the shoulders, where the Germans like to plant mines under the dirt. I don't think any of us even then realized there were Germans not much more than 100 yards away.

The Germans seem to have been just as surprised as we were. It must have been over a minute from the time they saw us to the first shot, and without the trailer, which kept stubbornly slewing in the wrong direction, we would have been long-since turned and out of sight.

There were two or three single shots, and the last of them struck the jeep somewhere up forward. Then there was a small fusillade, and as we went over the side for safety I remember thinking wildly that this was no question of snipers. The volley sounded like a regimental barrage to me: in actual fact it included one or two light machine guns, a couple of sub-machine or "blurp" guns, and a few rifles.

I found myself in "safety" underneath the jeep, jammed under the rear end with my nose up against the rear axle, wondering just how much Beattie was left exposed to fire. Wright was stretched out alongside. Jimmy Schwab was perched on the towbar between jeep and trailer, still trying to pull out the tie pin, and taking time out every few seconds to give the Germans a thorough dose of Gnadenhutten, Ohio's choicest language. Mecklin had taken a dive into the ditch, and we kept shouting at him to find whether he was all right. We got no answer. In point of fact, he was doing a fine job of worming his way

down the ditch, and might have gotten clean away if the second jeep had not appeared and drawn fire toward him.

Just why we felt safe under the jeep for the first couple of minutes, I don't now know. Bullets were pinging off the road, and occasionally one would bite dully into the jeep's carcass. We were goners the moment one of the men with the machineguns lowered his aim enough to sweep under the car's body. I thought what rotten shots the Germans were, and hoped fervently they wouldn't improve. They kept shooting high.

Beyond the wheels to either side of me I could see open fields. There was no cover, and I suddenly realized that there couldn't be any escape. The average man at the front thinks quite a bit about what it would be like to be wounded or killed. I am not conscious of ever having thought about capture. Somehow it always seemed like the unlikeliest of the three events. And yet under the jeep I had a strange feeling that this had all happened to me once before, and that things were following a very familiar pattern. Perhaps I had dreamed it on some other battlefield.

You don't like the idea of surrender, even when you're unarmed and almost without cover and your enemy is doing all the shooting. We stayed under the jeep and hoped without hope that something would happen.

Wright caught a bullet in the leg after three or four minutes, I should think. He just said quietly, "I have been hit."

I asked him if it was bad and he replied, "No, it is just my leg, and I couldn't feel it hit the bone." I asked him if he wanted a cigarette, and he said yes. I lit a couple and passed one to him. They tasted good.

Periodically the sporadic firing stiffened to a short volley. There was one man working through the field off to the right, crouched most of the time but occasionally rising to look at us. Almost none of the shots seemed to be hitting the jeep, but I suddenly realized that this man would have outflanked us enough in a few minutes to start pouring aimed fire between the wheels. Wright's wound suddenly made it clear that we were stuck for fair, which probably should have occurred to me before. We agreed that the white flag was indicated.

I gave Jimmy my handkerchief, and told him to wave it over the top of the jeep, which he could do from the towbar. He began waving and swearing, and still the firing continued.

Then the second jeep shrieked around the turn behind us. I leaned out from under our car and tried to flag them back. They caught the

waving, and succeeded in getting turned around before a unlucky shot killed the motor.

That drew fire for a few minutes, except for an occasional shot or two sent our way. The Germans were potting at the six men from the second jeep as they wormed down the ditch. Three of the six still lie out there. One is shot through the mouth, and at least one other is badly wounded.

After what seemed an hour, but probably was a quarter of it, a voice shouted, "*Herauskommen, herauskommen,*"—come out, come out.

We got crampedly out from under, and Jimmy and I got Wright's arms over our shoulders and started shuffling toward the roadblock. There were a half dozen Germans standing in front of it, dressed in steel helmets, *Luftwaffe* uniforms and camouflaged parachutists' capes. They carried rifles and automatic weapons, and there were three or four hand grenades jammed under each belt.

I had at first decided to conceal my knowledge of German for a few days, but gave up the idea in the interests of getting Wright's leg looked after. When the young *Luftwaffe* lieutenant in command began firing bad English at us, I replied in German. It must have surprised him considerably, because he continued making an effort at English. Finally he admitted, "I haf forgotten much. Fife years is long," and we talked German thereafter.

The lieutenant and his men were all very excited, and a little inclined to be tough until they had given us the once-over and discovered we were unarmed. No one could blame them for that. In the state of the German armies at this moment, death or a surround shadows every man every moment of the day and night. Any let-down in fanaticism would mean loss of hope, and hope is the only thing left to the German soldier.

The lieutenant was fanatic to the hilt. After he had led us back down the road and installed us in the rear box of a tiny French delivery truck, he leaned in the door, grinned wildly, and shouted, "By September 15, in three days, you will all be thrown back to the North Sea, and there will be no Dunkirk this time." No reply seemed indicated from people in our position.

Mecklin joined us in the truck, along with three GI's from the second jeep. They are Sergeant Ralph Harris of Screven, Ga., Sergeant Forest Eadler of Richmond, Ind., and Charles Padgett of Washington, Ind. They had the afternoon off and were out looking for a little peaceful amusement. They are very disgusted.

For four hours this afternoon we sprawled in the grass of a French

farmyard on the outskirts of Chaumont. Beyond one wall a wooded hill rose sharply, and little groups of French civilians watched us from among the trees. Once or twice somebody waved.

We speculated on the chances of a rescue by the F.F.I., but soon decided that there was no chance of that as long as we were at a headquarters. On the open road, perhaps.

We were searched when we reached the farmyard, and all our papers taken. A guard with sub-machinegun has stood within a few feet all afternoon, and when Wright was taken off to the hospital, two guards went with him. The sentry at one point was a mild-looking little guy whose accent betrayed him as an Austrian. The Austrians speak softly, with a sort of slur and lilt. Prussians shout when there's the slightest pretext. I remarked to him that Austria was a beautiful country, and that when I lived in Berlin I had always gone there on my vacations when I had the chance.

"It's not as nice as it used to be," he said quietly, and then moved a few steps away as though he had said too much.

For a half hour in mid-afternoon I was questioned by the colonel in command here, and by three other officers. They were extremely polite and showed no disposition to get rough when I refused to tell them where we had come from or what we had seen en route. I was the only one questioned, because nobody at the headquarters spoke English.

When the colonel asked why I spoke good German—"You must be German blood, aren't you?"—and I told him I was Scots-English in descent but had lived four years in Germany, he thought for a moment.

"What we can't understand," he finally said, "is why America wants to mix into European affairs, and why you force Germans in America to fight against the Fatherland."

Without treading on any toes, I tried to explain that German-Americans were as thoroughly American as any other blood strain, and that Hitler had declared war on us first. He denied this stoutly, and said that in any event we had opened hostilities by helping England and Russia with lend-lease, "without considering that Germany is the last bulwark against Bolshevism and that, if we lose, the whole world will be engulfed."

He asked what Americans were fighting for, and I tried to explain to him that there were ideals of Democracy which impressed many people as important, and that the whole world had finally grown tired of seeing one nation after another overrun.

"No American has ideals," he replied. "Our young men know what ideals are."

After a few experiences of that sort, you don't argue with Germans on things like that, even under normal conditions. I gave up. The colonel apparently decided at about the same moment that I was a pretty hopeless case myself, and said regretfully:

"But without your intervention, we should certainly have won with ease."

Conversation seemed pretty easy during the afternoon we spent in the farmyard, and everyone was in good spirits. I suspect we were still nervously excited, and that perhaps we subconsciously were relieved at being only prisoners, when we might very well have been dead. Tonight a reaction has set in.

Several times, somebody has wondered out loud whether we will be turned over to the *Gestapo*. For what it was worth, I told them that by all accounts, the German army keeps control of all prisoners it takes, and does not actively mishandle them. Privately, I am wondering whether the *Gestapo* is going to show undue interest in a former Berlin correspondent who has not been exactly secretive about his views on National Socialism.

As the candle gutters out and I finish this first entry, the night outside is throbbing with the motors of hundreds of R.A.F. heavy bombers flying so low they seem to be brushing the tops of the hills. They have been crowding thick on each other for over half an hour, and they are flying southeast, into Germany. Good luck to them and a safe homing.

Bourbonne-les-Bains
SEPTEMBER 13

I AM writing this entry on an ancient mattress spread on the floor of a stripped resort hotel—and on my own. They routed me out of our jail room at 3:00 A.M. today, leaving John Mecklin and the others still asleep. The *Feldwebel* explained I had been picked because I spoke German and there was only one seat available in the car.

John stirred drowsily and asked where I was going. I told him I didn't know, but that I'd probably be back soon. He said he wanted to come too, but the guard wouldn't let him. I know exactly how he felt. I'd have been glad to carry him in my lap if the guard had permitted. I didn't like the business of being singled out for special treatment.

I was perched on the rear seat of a rattletrap old French troop carrier with three Germans jammed in beside me. The car was covered

with tree branches as camouflage, and light machineguns poked out through the foliage on each side against possible attack from the forest.

It was pitch-black when we left in the middle of a convoy composed of every sort of confiscated civilian vehicle. There were trucks, vans, small sedans and ponderous charcoal burning lorries. At least half the vehicles were in tow, and every mile or two another would break down and the whole convoy would stop while another towline was rigged.

The cars showed only the dimmest sort of pinpoint headlights, and spent the night either losing contact entirely or crashing into each other in the dark. At each crash, at each breakdown, or on the two occasions when we took the wrong road through the woods, heavy Prussian voices argued violently, and blamed one another for all the assorted woe.

I got a certain amount of private amusement out of the spectacle of a lot of Germans—they are all born traffic cops—bawling and cursing at each other. Suddenly I had the bizarre feeling that I was on sure ground, that this was just like a hundred or a thousand traffic jams I had watched in Berlin, and that things were just as they had been five and a half years before. Then I came to and realized that there is nothing sure whatever about my future.

The men to my right and left were obviously tired to the bone from the incessant strain of retreat, from the constant sniping of the *Maquis* and the succession of bitter defeats. The man on my right pleaded with me to do nothing to provoke fire. "We don't want to have to shoot you," he said. Most of the time the men were quiet, and just peered into the black wall of the hostile forest. Even strong road convoys are no longer safe in this part of France.

For two hours during the night we stopped at the great citadel of Langres, whose plateau was a prime German objective in the first world war, and I was given a mattress in a brightly lit room where two Germans stood guard. I was not flattered by all the attention.

Just after dawn, we started again, and it seems clear the bulk of this force is off on another dreary withdrawal into the east. We crawled along at perhaps five miles an hour, and as the light grew I could see how utterly fatigued these men are. They have no morale in the usual sense. The soldiers among whom I have been thrown are to a great extent middle-aged men who have fought rearguard actions all across France, who have been nipped in the flank and rear by the *Maquis*, and who no longer are looking for a fight. They can see no farther ahead than the prospect of more retreats and more skirmishes in the woods, until the day comes when they cross into Germany and perhaps

can find a little respite. But whenever they are ordered to, they will fight, because they are Germans and the ability to fight well is instinct.

Their transport is pitiful. The bogged roads of Russia and the guns of British and American fighter planes have annihilated the superb German motorized columns which used to sweep like a scythe through the enemy. They are armed with whatever was available. Only half the rifles are German made. The rest are French or Belgian, booty from the lush years of conquest. I have seen machine guns of a half dozen nationalities, and British Sten guns and American revolvers which had been dropped for the *Maquis* and taken in bloody battles in the woods. I have seen no tanks, and only one eighty-eight millimeter gun.

They all hate the *Maquis* bitterly. One man explained to me that it doesn't fight fairly "because it shoots us from behind." I pointed out that the Germans were the developers of the Fifth Column, but he never seemed to have heard of it.

Just as we reached this shabby little health resort, three American P-51's dove out of an infinite blue sky and raked the tail end of our sorry column three or four times. We were fortunate, being close enough to town to take refuge around the corner of a big building. For an hour we huddled in a grove of thick trees, and makeshift ambulances scuttled back down the road to pick up the casualties. Nobody seemed to resent the American pilots, but there were a few bitter remarks about the *Luftwaffe*. I remembered the days when British troops in Belgium and in Greece had cursed the air for always being the enemy's.

Apparently I am in charge of the headquarters guard company, and will live in the guard room with them for the time being. They are assigned to General Ottenbacher, who commands this *kampfgruppe*. The term *kampfgruppe*, meaning battle group, was coined when things started going badly for Hitler's Reich and it became impossible to maintain combat divisions at full strength. A battle group is composed of remnants from beaten-up outfits, plus whatever odds and ends of non-combat troops are available.

The *Kampfgruppe Ottenbacher* is a mixture of frontline troops, depot units, *Luftwaffe* ground personnel and naval ratings. Some of it came from Bordeaux and the Toulon area, some from the great battlefields of Normandy, and some from the scores of smashed air bases from which the German air force, when it was top dog, tried to terrorize England.

Somewhere to the east of us there are regular divisions waiting for

the day when the assault on the Reich's own borders will begin all along the line. It is left to the worn-out men of the few battle groups still functioning on French soil to resist as best they can and to gain a few more days for the defense which will decide the fate of Germany.

When we reached Bourbonne-les-Bains, I got a chance to shave and wash up. We lost bed-rolls and baggage in the jeep trailer, but by dint of a little fast talking, did get the Germans to restore a few personal effects. I have with me my trench coat and a musette bag containing toilet articles, a towel, and extra socks and handkerchief, plus a few odds and ends like sun glasses and anti-mosquito cream which don't appear to have any immediate value. The troops at the roadblock had removed from the bag a hunting knife made from a whipsaw blade which had been given me in the Canadian woods, a few odds and ends of American "K" ration, but had unaccountably taken only one of my three pipes. Since they also appropriated all the cigarettes and smoking tobacco, the pipes are of no immediate use, but all in all I am in much better case than most prisoners, who start off with nothing beyond what they stand up in.

I slept most of the day, having nothing else to do. One or two of the guards showed a tendency to chat, and may eventually throw a little light on just what keeps Germany going in the face of inevitable chaos.

The guards gave me the same food they got themselves, which incidentally is stipulated in the Geneva convention governing treatment of war prisoners. We had had no breakfast en route, but at 11:00 A.M. we had a fragment of sausage and brown bread. At 1:00 P.M. there were noodles with a few scraps of meat. At 6:00 P.M. we had more bread, some very salty sardines, and watery *ersatz* tea whose chief virtue was that it didn't taste as bad as yesterday's coffee. It is nothing like the real article, and would certainly turn the stomach of any loyal Britisher, but it is not downright awful.

If this is the German frontline diet, I am beginning to understand why Hitler's combat troops, starting with the Tunisian campaign, have been wolfing down such incredible amounts of allied food, first chance they got after capture.

Bourbonne-les-Bains
SEPTEMBER 14

SLOWLY I am beginning to grasp what drives the German nation in this sixth dismal year of a war which started with victory and can end only in defeat. Not being a German myself, I never shall completely

understand it. But due to my knowledge of the language and to the fact that I am a single prisoner in close contact with Germans, I am getting a chance to talk and to ask questions. Those I have met so far are perfectly willing to talk, particularly when it concerns the ideological aspects of the war. In fact, they normally thrust the ideology on you and insist on talking about it, whether with some hopes of making a convert or from a desire to justify themselves, I don't know.

Just as I dropped off to sleep last night, I was summoned upstairs in the hotel for my first formal questioning. A gray-haired major with a bad limp and a scar-lined face was waiting for me in a barren little room. He dismissed the guard, and then rolled out on the table top a big map covering the entire front from Aachem to the Swiss border.

"How far did you have to travel to reach Chaumont," he asked after taking my name and serial number and noting my hopeful assertion that war correspondents were entitled to officers' treatment.

"Quite a long distance," I replied.

"Where from?" he asked.

"From somewhere between Reims and Paris," I said. That was vague enough.

"It was, of course, an Army headquarters," he said.

"No," I replied. "You know, correspondents roam around a great deal and are seldom tied down."

"Were you with tank or infantry forces today?" he asked.

"Oh, we are with all sorts of forces every day," I said.

He repeated the question, and added, "there must have been some specific forces, and you must be with some specific unit."

"I don't recall any," I answered. "As a matter of fact, we were on the way to watch 20,000 Germans surrender at Chatillon-sur-Seine."

"You know, of course, that no 20,000 Germans would ever surrender. The figure must be greatly exaggerated."

"We have often taken even bigger batches," I said.

"You probably expect to get us too," he said, "but I think we will manage to get this battle group out of trouble: retreating is a fine art with which I unfortunately have had considerable experience in Russia."

I began wondering whether perhaps the *Kampgruppe Ottenbacher* might be put in the bag, and me with it.

The major asked a few more questions, then with a sudden smile he said:

"Is it that you, as a war correspondent attached to the American army, don't know any military information, or that you won't tell us?"

"Call it a combination of both," I said.

"That ends that, then," he said. He wrote across the slip, "the prisoner refuses further statements," turned to me and said, "Now, let's chat."

The major's name was Roewer. He was obviously a man of extremely good background, and he talked intelligently on any variety of subjects. I was shocked when he said he was thirty-four, my own age, because he looked nearer fifty, with his scars and his limp and the tired lines in his face.

"Russia did this to me," he said. "You see, I was in the terrible time at Kalinin in the winter of '41-'42, and went through the whole awful retreat. We all froze, and I almost lost both feet. We made a terrible miscalculation of the strength of the Red Army, you know. It cost us the war."

He talked again of the French campaign, which he called "another great miscalculation."

"Russia finished me for fighting, and I am good only for intelligence work," he said. "But in my present position one sees a lot, and I have seen this summer the highest form of *blitzkrieg* yet developed. You Americans brought something new into this war beside your fine equipment. You brought an imagination one would not have looked for in nonprofessionals. Western strategy in the past would never have had the imagination for your remarkable sweep through France—it was quite frankly breathtaking. A real classic. If you had not been forced finally to come to a halt, we could never have reorganized. Now, I hope, we can hold the Reich's borders until spring."

I told him a great many people on the allied side expected victory by Christmas.

"If we only had the answer to halting the Russian masses you would never win the victory at all," he said. "We could then turn on you and force a stalemate, even though you are too firmly set on the continent to be defeated. The Russians individually are inferior soldiers, but they are too many for us and just overwhelm us."

I remarked that the major's last remark sounded like a bad short estimate of Russian ability.

"You mean we've done that before, and still make the same mistake," he said. "My statement stands, but I don't believe, as many do, that the next battle will end in complete victory for the German *Wehrmacht* and defeat for the Red Army. It is too late for that."

He stopped a moment and went on:

"Don't think that means we won't fight this war out to the end, because we will. These old men of mine here are doing wonders with no

weapons, and they will continue to. For myself, I would rather be dead and buried than subjugated to foreign domination, particularly Russian."

With a lieutenant named Klein who used to be a Munich portrait painter, we emptied the major's last bottle of Bordeaux. The lieutenant brought out a bottle of good French brandy. We talked a bit about music and travel, about the Olympic Games of 1936, "in the days when the world didn't hate us," as the lieutenant ruefully remarked. Both men wanted to know what new books had come out in English, and whether any new authors had scored big successes. I had wondered at first whether the drinks and the "chat" angle were intended to throw me off my guard. Gradually I became convinced that these were two men who had fought five years of war, who were thoroughly weary, and who welcomed the slightest opportunity to indulge in quiet conversation.

Klein said his last letters from Munich had described the town as flattened, from railroad station through the city hall square to the Hofbraeuhaus, temple of German beer drinkers. He said no German ever could forgive the assaults on the cities and the civilian population. I told him I had been through the London *blitz*, and that as far as the rest of the world was concerned, Germany was just getting her own back with interest.

Like my guards this morning, both men wanted to know all about V-1, and had a completely exaggerated idea of its effects. When I told them it rarely seemed to start fires, and that official German news agency reports of the "single sea of flames" which was London were so much hokum, they refused at first to believe. I did not tell them the percentage of V-1's which was being shot down harmlessly before they ever reached the target, but they did finally admit that the V-1 attacks were only a zephyr compared with the allied air assault. Both talked of new missiles to come, presumably the rocket bombs which London has been awaiting for weeks, but Roewer made the surprising admission that all that sort of thing was "just part of a strategy of the defensive which never can bring us victory."

Klein the artist asked about Paris, and said he was thankful when I told him that the beautiful city was intact. When I described the reception which greeted the allied forces on the day of the French liberation, and which continued for the two weeks I was there, he said, "You know, I once led a German guard of honor past the Arc de Triomphe, and when we goose-stepped in honor of the unknown sol-

dier, the crowd applauded us: then we were getting the adulation which comes with victory."

Both men asked persistently why America was at war with Germany, and refused to believe me when I told them Hitler had declared war first on the United States. When I said that had he failed to do so, the great weight of American production would almost inevitably have gone to the Pacific, the major said, "Herrgott, that would have been fine."

The major complained that allied use of the F.F.I. was an unfair type of warfare, and added, "I can't understand how Eisenhower, as a soldier, can lend his approval to that sort of thing."

"Those fellows shoot at us from everywhere," he said. "We are never safe even far behind our own lines. That, like the air attacks, isn't clean war."

I reminded him that Germany had been in favor of air war at the time when the heavy squadrons were on her side, and that the Germans had used the Fifth Column in every campaign they ever fought. I took a chance and added, "you know, the world doesn't exactly approve of certain practices of your own *Gestapo* and SS."

"Please understand," Lieutenant Klein said soberly, "that German army officers do not condone the SS or the *Gestapo*, and would gladly see them abolished."

I went back downstairs to my mattress feeling that both Roewer and Klein knew Germany was approaching the end, and that the end would be terrible. They seemed unaffected by Goebbels' propaganda hysterics, and completely clear on the hopelessness of the strategic situation. They were not looking for miracles which might change the whole course of the war.

The guards are different. They know how bad the front situation has become, and what the present odds are against them. But they still look to Hitler to pull something out of the hat or, incredibly, to Britain and America to see the light and "fight Russia side by side with us, as you should."

Most of the day, today, I watched the guards play *skat*, Germany's favorite card game. It is completely unlike any other card game I have ever seen, and is played with a maximum of shouting, post-morteming and slamming of cards on the table. When I told them I could play the game, they shook their heads wonderingly as though to say, "you see, these Americans are not complete barbarians."

Each of us got a plate of thick pea soup for lunch, with a fragment of sausage floating in it. It was not bad, but otherwise there has been

no food all day except a couple of cups of *ersatz* tea and a chunk of cheese which was doled out a few minutes ago, at 6:00 P.M., just before another retreat order came in. We have been hearing distant artillery or demolitions periodically all afternoon, and the Americans must be on the advance again.

I am very grateful we are to move, for the most part, in darkness. It is no fun to travel with a German convoy at the mercy of allied air power, and the guards get so jittery every time they see a plane that it is not safe anywhere in their vicinity.

Bains-les-Bains

SEPTEMBER 15

WE ARRIVED here between 1:00 and 2:00 o'clock this morning after seven hours on the road—Lord alone knows what our average speed was, but I do know that after the first hour and three-quarters we had finally reached a signpost which put us seven kilometers outside our starting point at Bourbonne.

Everything goes wrong in these German convoys. The transport is hopelessly antiquated, and at least two-thirds of the vehicles are weak-lunged little civilian cars which never were intended for such a job. The few special army trucks and half-tracks still left are completely worn out. About half are constantly in tow. The convoy trips are one long succession of breakdowns and arguments, and they are haunted by the fear of air attack. The cars move along so smothered in tree-branch camouflage that a convoy must look from the air like Birnam Wood on the move for Dunsinane.

All along the highway there are big roadblocks which consist of heavy tree trunks notched together, log-cabin-like, into cribs filled with boulders as ballast. But only rarely are there 88's or other antitank guns on hand to turn them into effective obstacles. The armament of this battle group is pitiful. I have seen a very few Tiger and Panther tanks and a handful of scout cars, but almost no artillery of any description.

All along the road you pass troops wearily slogging it eastward on foot. Many of them carry the *Panzerfaust*, which looks like a thick broomstick with a football on the end of it. The guards say it is fired from the shoulder, and that it will destroy any known tank if it hits. Some of them claim it will win the war. Others say it's impossible to

hit anything with *Panzerfaust* unless you're within 20 yards, and that it's a suicide weapon in any event.

The troops without exception are completely worn out. A few lucky individuals have managed to steal bicycles from the French, but they seem hardly able to sit upright. There are a great number of horse-drawn carts, and the poor animals are in worse shape than the men.

It is incredible that the German army manages to move at all, and to extricate even part of its forces from the mesh of air and land power cast around it. The truth of the matter obviously is that these men are instinctively very fine soldiers who have learned in five years of toughening campaigns how to handle themselves in any emergency.

I had plenty of chance all night to talk to the soldiers in the convoy, and most of them like to talk. Some are very radical and a few are downright treasonable. Three different men told me that Germany's plight is due to her leaders, and that they should be shot for betraying the people. The same three men, however, were rabidly anti-Communist, and insisted they would fight to the last against "the Bolsheviks." They have little or no hatred for either British or Americans, but think we should be fighting on their side. Some are convinced we will be "before the war is over," and others glumly predict that "you'll be sorry some day when we're not around to help you."

On the basis of three days' talking thus far, I am amazed at the extent of antiCommunist feeling. Six years of Nazi propaganda had turned it into a very strong force by the time I left Berlin in the spring of 1939. The five war years since then have made it overwhelming. I have not met a single German who is not convinced that Germany is the world's sole bulwark against a Communist tide which, if Hitler loses the war, will sweep across the Rhine and the English channel and eventually flood across the Atlantic into the Americas.

These Germans think of all Russians as "eastern half-men" or "Asiatic subhumans" who destroy everything they meet. They compare the Red Army to a locust swarm which eats the countryside to the bone as it passes. They talk of it in the sort of tone you'd expect a pagan to reserve for his devil-god. I wonder whether Goebbels hasn't overplayed his hand a bit, and whether that sort of attitude produces the stoutest kind of defense.

After reaching here in the pitch black, we spent the rest of the night in the car. It was cold and damp, and I'm stiff as a board today. The Germans say they have no blankets to spare, and the trench coat is pretty thin covering for these hills. The only bright spot at the mo-

ment is that one of my companions in the car slipped me a quarter-pound package of pretty bad pipe tobacco and the first half dozen cigarettes I have seen since day before yesterday.

Later: Have been trying to sleep off and on all day on a bunk in the former casino of the hotel in this little bath resort, but it was made impossible by loud voices and louder boots. All German army boots have heels reinforced with steel, and the average soldier hits the floor at each step as though he were trying to dig a foxhole at one blow. Failing on sleep, I gave myself a boost in morale by laundering my spare socks and handkerchief.

I have acquired an assortment of companions in distress, at any rate. One is a young Parisian named Albert François who until two months ago worked on the subway, and who was sent off just recently to act as liaison with the Americans. He is scared stiff, and with reason. He was captured in the uniform of the crack *Chasseurs Alpins*, in which he had done his conscript training, but the Germans say he is from the *Maquis* and should be shot out of hand. Two or three of the guards have come up to him during the day, looked him over, and said "*Maquis nicht gut*," all of which has been no help whatever to his morale.

The bandstand at one end of the room now holds three venerable gentlemen picked from the local population as hostages. It seems that someone took a pot shot at General Ottenbacher from the bushes this morning, and the town will be held responsible if anything of the sort happens again. The old men are not being mistreated. Their wives and daughters were permitted to bring them supper, which consisted of a huge stew which had guards and me drooling, a salad, and big chunks of bread and soft French cheese. There were two bottles of wine and a bottle of *kirsch*, that firewater made from cherrystones by both French and Germans alike. As I write this, supper and wine have long since disappeared, and the three old men are sipping their *kirsch* and chatting in low voices.

One guard this afternoon presented me with a novel idea. He walked over, apologized—surprisingly—for interrupting me at an autobiography of von Richthofen, and began questioning me in detail about the coming American election. He had only a very foggy notion of who Dewey was, but strangest of all, he was proRoosevelt. To most Germans, Roosevelt ranks on a par with Churchill, and only a short bit below Stalin, as a war criminal.

I asked him why he was so interested in Roosevelt.

"Well, I fought in the Vosges during the last war," he said, "and

don't forget, we were not beaten. We retired in good order across the Rhine. When we entered Stuttgart, there were big transparents strung across the streets reading, '*Heisst willkommen, wackere Streiter; Gott und Wilson helfen weiter*'—welcome, brave warriors; God and Wilson will aid us. Nobody believes that sort of thing any more. Your politicians have made it too clear that a lost war means a lost Germany. But I still feel that if we are to get decency from anyone, it will be the United States."

I told him I thought that in the interests of civilization, the allies would want to revive democratic ideals in Germany and eventually to gain her cooperation in a new world.

"There is no new world for us," he said. Then he suddenly realized he had been talking defeatism, and added belligerently, "Of course, you haven't won yet. You may have driven us out of France, and you seem to think you can take Berlin, but I suppose you know we still hold Calais and Dunkirk and Boulogne and Brest."

I hope the thought made him feel better.

Xertigny
SEPTEMBER 16

IT BECAME evident when we reached this tiny hill town tonight why the plan to send me on to corps headquarters late yesterday suddenly was cancelled. We are practically encircled and may not be able to make our way over the high Vosges into the Rhine slopes.

There had been rumors to that effect this morning when the guard changed and the men who had been on duty all night at headquarters came in. The order to move came suddenly late in the afternoon, and when we reached here and bivouacked for the night in the village school room, I found three *Feldwebels* standing in front of a map of France, shaking their heads mournfully.

One of them finally told me that an American column has reached Epinal, only about eight miles from here, and that another three or four mile advance will cut the last road out.

"We may be able to hold them off and slip through," the *Feldwebel* said, "but if they once establish a road block we can never cut our way out. We aren't strong enough to attack."

I suppose the Americans have taken Epinal from the north, as part of an effort to close another big pocket with the Seventh Army coming up from southern France. If they succeed, they will have pretty well

cleaned up everything west of the Vosges, and captivity as far as I'm concerned will have been just a brief and not very unpleasant interlude. Except for the delay in getting a blanket, which was finally given me today, I have no complaints with my handling by the front-line troops. Because of the encirclement threat, I have been kept with them much longer than a prisoner normally would be, and circumstances have given me plenty of chance to talk to them. That is all to the good. I am not looking forward to the moment when I get back into Germany itself and my identity is established, because there are people in Berlin who may take a more specific interest in my case.

When we woke this morning, there were three new French hostages in the casino with us, seated like their predecessors on the bandstand and, like their predecessors, sipping from a large bottle and chatting with each other. One of them was an ancient with one wall eye and a pair of moustaches reminiscent of Bismarck. This old gentleman was responsible for the first two real laughs I have had since my capture.

For some time he had kept winking openly at me across the room. Finally, when there were only a couple of guards around, I strolled over and said good morning. The old man gave me a drink of *kirsch* out of the bottle, whuffed out his moustaches and said:

"The de Gaullists say I'm a collaborator and a traitor, because I refused to support them in England. Somebody shoots at the German General and the Boches take me as a French hostage. Neither side likes me. I hate both English and Germans. My whole trouble is I'm a Frenchman."

That seemed to call for some sort of rejoinder. I asked him how he liked Americans.

"I don't know," he said explosively, blowing another blast through the curtain of hair. "I've never met any yet." The implication was that he didn't expect to like them, either.

I complimented him on his taste in *kirsch*, at any rate, and asked offhand whether he thought I could get any. It developed his son was the local fire-water tycoon. When the son arrived, a short time later, a deal was fixed on the basis of 500 francs for a liter. That represents ten dollars, and before the war would have bought the finest of brandies or liqueurs, but I had a feeling that it was only a question of time before the money in my pockets would be confiscated in any event.

Early this afternoon the son reappeared with the bottle, and one of the German guards sauntered over to watch proceedings, without any attempt to stop them.

I told the son I must pay him in "Liberation Francs," the money

issued to the allied invading force for use anywhere in France. I explained with what eloquence my French would permit that this particular slip of paper was backed by the Bank of France, the Bank of England and the United States Treasury, and thus was probably better than any other money in the entire world. The Frenchman looked doubtful, and I was considering the advisability of a short discourse on the gold buried at Fort Knox, Kentucky, when the German guard succumbed to the patriotic urge and fixed everything.

"That money's no good whatever," he said. "The only money worth anything is the Reichsmark."

That made the Frenchman mad.

"You know perfectly well the Americans will be here in four or five days," he snapped. "Where will the Reichsmark be then?"

The German shrugged, and walked off. A little while later he strolled over to my bunk and asked several elaborate questions about the *kirsch*. The whole effect was that of the cop on the beat who takes an apple from the fruitstand as his prerogative, so I fished out the tin cup I had appropriated in the Major's room, and gave him a drink. He said it wasn't as good as German *kirsch*, but I guess he was satisfied because he hasn't told anyone else about it.

A couple of the guards today were talking about a new gun which will shoot from Germany to New York, and about other weapons "which we have coming" which will burn the western front to a cinder. There is a lot of talk of rockets, and of the jet-propelled fighters which our air force already has encountered in small numbers. One guard told me to "wait until we have them by the thousands and then see whether your air bandits dare keep bombing our women and children."

Almost every guard here has had second-hand experience with the great air attacks on German cities, and can dig out voluminous letters from relatives describing the results. A big percentage of them have lost their homes, and many have lost wives, children or close relatives. I am amazed at the amount of detail the German censorship permits families back home to send to the fighting troops. I have seen letters describing "everyone in the apartment next door incinerated," or "a big bomb which landed at the corner and completely destroyed seven large buildings."

Perhaps the Nazis encourage that sort of description with the idea it will infuriate the troops. I doubt that it does. Plenty of soldiers have told me "we will never forget this inhuman air warfare," and the R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F. are habitually described as *Luftgangster*, air gangsters, but it all sounds like repetition by rote. I think the average

front soldier has too much danger on his own hands to spend very much time worrying about someone else's peril, and that the air war only strikes home to him when he loses a member of his family. The German civilian reaction is probably entirely different.

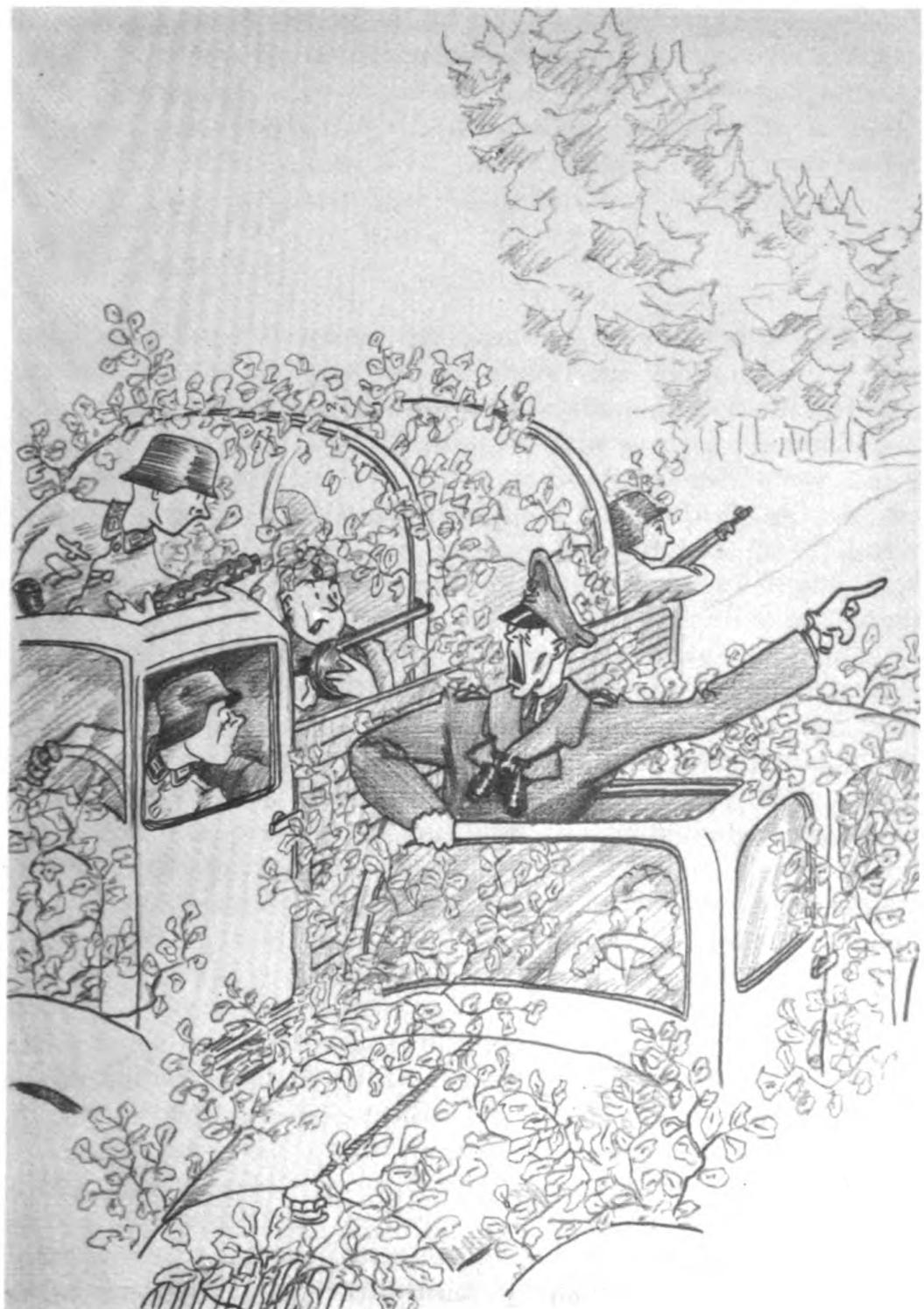
The talk about retaliatory weapons and new defensive arms is quite obviously fostered by all the propaganda agencies. It does give the average German something to hope for, and fantastic as the stories are, the legend of Hitler's infallibility is still strong enough to cause millions of Germans to believe them.

We made the seven miles to Xertigny in the record-breaking time of twenty-five minutes, probably because nothing broke down on route and there were no road forks where the column could stop to argue. The convoy was in charge of a certain Lieutenant Mahlert, a gentleman who apparently has taken it on himself to see that no prisoner's morale ever rises above his boot-tops. Mahlert is about forty years old. His bald head is shaped like a lemon, and he wears the Prussian rimless monocle. He habitually dresses in an exaggerated peaked cap, riding breeches, long flared overcoat, highly polished boots with spurs, and always wears fieldglasses. He is the perfect caricature of the Prussian officer: what fun a bunch of GI's would have with him.

Mahlert's anti-Beattie campaign consists of a series of cold stares through the monocle. He enters the guard room several times a day and stands there staring, then issues loud instructions to the guard to watch the prisoners closely and "see they don't pull any of their tricks." On the road, he cruises up and down the convoy bawling at everyone, and usually can be counted on to turn the whole procession into a shambles within the first five miles. Since the lieutenant to date has confined himself to staring or shouting at me, he has succeeded only in raising my morale. The guards call him "the superannuated cockerel."

Nineteen of us—seventeen guards, my French friend François, and myself—are bedded down on a lot of damp straw in this twelve by fourteen foot schoolroom, which has its advantages in animal heat but no other virtues I can think of. Nobody has bathed in a long time, and the whole crowd of us is very high indeed.

There is a little book case in one corner, and François and I have appropriated a couple of Jules Verne novels and *Oliver Twist* and *The Last of the Mohicans* in French. This enables me to throw away a book by a German war correspondent on the glories of the advance into France in 1940, which was full of a lot of nauseating stuff on the beauty of death for the Fuehrer, and which I had been reading out of sheerest desperation.



One of the guards just sat down beside me and after a few minutes asked in a whisper if I thought perhaps Hitler had died in the bomb attempt of July 20. I told him I didn't think so. It is quite a shock to find that sort of doubt in circulation. I would like to know how widespread it is.

Xertigny

SEPTEMBER 17

WE CAN hear more demolitions today, and another move is imminent. Unfortunately the clouds are brushing the hilltops and the allied air forces on this part of the front will be grounded, which means the Germans can move with impunity. The delicacy of the situation is indicated by the fact that there was no hot food today until 4:30 P.M., and then only a thin soup made from vegetables stolen out of French fields. There have been no cigarettes issued the troops for two days. Normally, the German soldier gets six cigarettes and two cigars each day.

The *Feldwebel*, who spends his night watches studying diligently in a German-English dictionary and who occasionally asks me for a pronunciation, gave me a cigarette and an onion, and also a copy of *Die Wache*, the German equivalent of the American Army's *Stars and Stripes*. The paper is well put together, but makes no attempt to amuse or divert and devotes its entire effort to propaganda.

This week's issue gives half a page to a lot of veiled hints at secret weapons. In this connection its quotes Churchill as saying, "If we don't win the war in the next few weeks, we have lost it," and Secretary of War Stimson as declaring that if the war in Europe does not end this fall, the United States will reserve her freedom of action.

I told two or three of the guards that that sort of thing was pure invention, but it was quite apparent that they cling to everything which stimulates hope in the slightest, and that they long desperately for something which will force us to admit a stalemate.

Most of the guards think V-1 has completely devastated half of England, and that other V-1's mounted on submarines will shortly flatten New York. They are constantly after me to supply the gory details to supplement the lurid stories published in the German papers. I have done my best to throw cold water on all the enthusiasm, but I haven't had much success.

Major Roewer says he is still trying to recover my Army credentials and other papers, which should have been sent on with me from Chau-

mont, but he doesn't offer much hope. Apparently the Colonel in command was killed in an American attack the day I left, and the headquarters seems to have been overrun. I don't like the idea of being adrift in Germany with no means of identification whatever. I wonder what happened to Wright Bryan and John Mecklin. Quite possibly they were freed. Wright at least should have been left in hospital.

Dompierre

SEPTEMBER 18

TEN-TENTHS cloud which dripped a day-long rain onto the sodden forest and reduced visibility in the hills to only a few hundred yards enabled this headquarters, at least, to escape from the Epinal pocket today. Tonight we are bedded down in a big, rambling farm on the outskirts of town, with the road open to Germany. We are still only seven miles from Epinal, but the weather has been so bad that the Americans have not moved, and they have had no air reconnaissance to keep track of us.

A good many thousand troops are still in the bag, and may very well fail to escape over the one road still open. Like all Germans these days, they are under orders to retreat only under the heaviest pressure, and then not until they are specifically told to do so. But the headquarters is beyond the claw of the pincer, and I'm afraid it won't be long before I'm taken off into Germany itself.

We did about thirty miles today in four hours, coughing and spluttering our way along a road which snaked through deep valleys and over the shoulders of heavily wooded hills. Several times behind us we heard loud explosions, and once there was distant machine gun fire. We passed one high, arched railway bridge built of heavy stones which had already been blown up. I haven't seen a train in operation in the entire German zone, and the Germans obviously are going to deprive us of the railroads for as long as possible.

All bridges and culverts along the roads have been mined, and unhappy little groups of engineers stand dripping in the rain waiting to set the fuses and clear out. It looks almost as though the Germans will blow all bridges before their own men are out, which would be consistent with the "fight-to-the-death" order to the rearguards.

Three times this morning we passed crossroads with signposts putting Epinal only eleven kilometers—seven miles—up the left-hand fork, and each time we turned right. At each of the crossroads there was a

barricade of brush or, in one case, garden chairs, across the road, and a sign reading "Enemy territory beyond this point—danger." We would never have been captured if the Americans had taken steps to warn of danger ahead.

The spirit of the German guards has improved tremendously since we got out through the mouth of the pocket. Once we had crossed the upper reaches of the Moselle, the men in the old charcoal-burning truck just ahead of us started singing. They shifted from marching songs to love songs and the nostalgic fatherland ballads which every German loves, and they sang them beautifully. Among the allied troops, only the Welsh and the Poles and the American Negroes can sing as well in chorus as the German infantry. Tonight, in our barrack room, which was used until this morning as a makeshift school for small boys, the guards have broached a few bottles of looted wine and are drinking and laughing for the first time.

My own spirits are correspondingly low. In the first place, the chances of recapture are very slim. And a half hour ago, one of the guards, who had just come in from a patrol back beyond Xertigny, told me both Wright Bryan and John Mecklin are free. He said he had been told that Wright had been left in the hospital at Chaumont, which had been evacuated under pressure, and that John and four other prisoners had been set free on the road by a naval column with which they were traveling back toward Germany. The column had run into trouble en route, and since nobody had the time to care for the prisoners, they had been told to take to the woods.

I hope his story is right, for their sakes. But I had been expecting each day to join forces with them, and it makes me feel very lonesome.

(Mecklin was freed while being evacuated from Chaumont toward the east. Bryan was not. Despite the promises of the German doctor, he was moved from the hospital with all other military patients. At various times in the few days following, he was forced to walk considerable distances on his wounded leg, was shipped in jammed box-cars on infested straw, and was generally made victim of the neglect which most American wounded experienced at the hands of the Germans. As a result of this callousness, which extended up to the time he reached American army doctors at Oflag 64 in Poland, where all American ground force officer prisoners were kept, what had been a simple wound was badly complicated, and Bryan was still in hospital a month after V-E Day.)

Dompierre
SEPTEMBER 19

AMERICAN artillery shells are dropping into the woods two or three thousand yards from this farm today, but unfortunately it is not the sort of purposeful fire which precedes an attack. I suspect they are just feeling the woods out, and trying to keep the Germans stirred up.

The first dozen shells or so flushed a couple of Tiger tanks from the woods, and they waddled off toward the east. There are so few of them in this neighborhood that the Germans can't hope to use them for anything except mobile artillery, and they are always kept well under cover during the day for fear of rocket-firing planes. The Germans here are still talking of what happened to the counter-attack at Mortain, in Normandy, when fighters with rockets caught the tanks in the open.

Otherwise, this countryside has been empty all day. The weather became crystal clear this morning, and we have heard the sound of American planes most of the day, although only once did one come directly over the farm. Lieutenant Mahlert caught me looking out the window at it and told me I was to stay indoors at all times. I told him I was under the impression that even prisoners were entitled to a certain amount of exercise and fresh air, but he said he had never heard of the regulation.

The woods where the shells are falling must be full of German troops, but they keep completely under cover, and Mahlert had to call off a little function in the farmyard at which he was scheduled to give the guard company a fight talk about Fuehrer and Vaterland. This, it might be said, caused considerable satisfaction among the guard company, which was able to keep its *skat* games going without interruption.

The holiday spirit was stimulated this morning by the slaughter of a huge boar and a young bull, and by the arrival of the first load of potatoes anyone had seen in days and days. We had pork chops and potatoes for lunch, and veal cutlets and potatoes for dinner, and everyone was happy except the French farmer and his family, who I suspect had not been paid for the animals.

Even François was happy tonight, because for the first time the guards treated him almost as an equal. He got just as much to eat as anyone else, and only had to sweep the floor twice during the day. With each passing day, he is getting a little more confident that the

Germans won't shoot him after all. I should think that, having lasted a week, he is past the danger point.

The schoolful of small boys, about thirty of them, returned *en masse* today and were permitted to gather up their belongings and take them off to wherever their new refuge is. It develops that they have moved four times so far. Three or four of them showed a lot of interest in my American uniform, but when one twelve-year-old came up and saluted and started to open a conversation their teacher rushed over and herded him off.

About noon, a *Feldwebel* arrived from corps headquarters, which apparently is pretty close, to go through the whole identity business again with François and myself. Fortunately he confined himself to details and I didn't have to repeat the whole rigamarole of why America is picking on poor little Germany and the like.

Gerardmer
SEPTEMBER 20

A FEW hundred Germans, holding open the line of retreat across the comb of the Vosges, are nervously riding herd on several thousand French in this beautiful lakeside resort among the steep, pine-blanketed mountains. They are glum and surly, and walk the streets in twos and fours looking neither to the right nor left, and the population makes little secret what it thinks of them.

François and I classed as minor heroes today when we arrived in town and sat with a guard in the car for an hour and a half while the *Feldwebel* in charge of us tried to find somebody willing to take us over. Women and children and the few men in evidence smiled and waved at us, and a couple of women even stuck their heads into the car to say hello. The guard roused himself enough to shoo them away in bad French.

I made a tentative, spur-of-the-moment attempt to escape last night, and with luck it might have worked. A guard had taken us out to the latrine, and re-entered the pitch-black building behind us. I was first in line, and as we went through the door, I quickly stepped to one side and waited until he and François had passed through into the blackness. Then I stepped outside again.

It was so dark inside the building that it might have been several hours before the Germans realized I was not on my straw pile, and by that time I certainly could have found shelter in some farm or in the

thick woods. Unfortunately another guard who had been finishing off a cigarette turned up with his tommy gun a few paces from the building and told me I shouldn't come outside without an escort. He obviously didn't realize what was up, or I might have been in for a little trouble. Escape attempts are generally punished with two or three weeks' solitary confinement.

We were taken off at 9:30 A.M. today in a big Buick limousine, which was a new high in luxury and which also happens to be the only car in this part of the world with no mechanical wheezes. When we left the *Kampfgruppe Ottenbacher*, several officers and guards came up and insisted on shaking hands and wishing me good luck. I was sorry to leave them, because the chances of escape or recapture are greatly decreased from now on, and it is highly unlikely that our treatment will be as good.

The first stop was corps headquarters, and there I finally got a type-written pass which states:

"To the American War Correspondent Edward Beattie, born 11,6,09 in Springfield (Massachusetts), Identity number 0-259029, it is hereby confirmed, that he was captured 9,12,44 unarmed, in a car about four kilometers north of Chaumont. His papers, with the U.S.Army credentials issued by the War Department, have been lost."

There is no picture on it, and presumably it has no particular value, but it makes me feel a little more secure.

The senior colonel at corps headquarters interrogated me for over half an hour, and as usual did most of the talking. He admitted, as Roewer had done, that Germany at the moment "is committed to the sort of strategy which can never produce anything better than a stand-off," and asked two or three times "why the so-called democracies don't realize that there is still time to make common cause with us against Bolshevism."

"We will never give in while Bolshevism is on the offensive," he said. This has obviously become an obsession with all ranks, but the frequency with which it's repeated reminds me more and more of whistling past the graveyard. This obsession is combined with a fear of what will happen if and when Germany loses the war. Declarations of allied statesmen have left the German people no grounds for hope, and the average German knows just enough of the dark chapters of Nazi treatment of conquered peoples to give him a deep dread of retribution.

The colonel, typically, said in one breath that "the decision has not yet fallen," and in the next that "you'll have your regrets, some day,

when there is no more Germany to fight the battle of the west against Communism." A good few at the front know, deep in themselves, that the war is lost. The officers, of course, can't admit it to the troops, but the troops sometimes talk about it among themselves, when they are sure there's no stool pigeon in the group.

I'm sure a great percentage of the German army would be in favor today of a negotiated peace which provided Germany some shreds of "honor" and which made possible some sort of independent existence. None with whom I have spoken is ready for unconditional surrender, and Goebbels for months has been playing on the national obsession with Communism to make unconditional surrender look like the prelude to "Bolshevik chaos." And the propaganda works.

I wish I were as optimistic about the end of the war as I was two weeks ago in Paris. Then it seemed inevitable that, if the gasoline supplies held out, we should have pierced the Siegfried Line before we were forced to slow down and regroup. The Germans here say they have had just enough time, and that the Reich's borders can be held against all comers. I don't think they believe that for a moment, because they have all had a chance to see the strength massed against them, but I'm afraid it will take another full-dress campaign.

The next two or three weeks should decide, and meanwhile I am going to be living in a complete news vacuum. I haven't even been able to get the contents of the daily German communique so far. The guards always brush aside all questions and say they haven't heard anything about it. They seem interested only in their own small sector of front and in the prospect of setting foot soon, even in defeat, on German soil again.

Today's move east represented far and away the longest jump I have made. The guns were very loud even at corps headquarters, but tonight we can hear nothing except the wind in the towering trees and the coughs of an occasional convoy racking its way toward the front with food.

We were finally thrown for the afternoon into a field gendarmerie post in what had once been a cafe. The glassed-in terrace where we were turned loose with an uncommunicative guard overlooks a lovely waterfall, and there were still a few dust-covered postcards in the usual livid colors, hanging in a rack on the wall. We don't belong to the field gendarmerie, but they had to take us because nobody in Gerardmer ever seemed to have heard of an army headquarters here. It's reminiscent of our own days of incessant retreats.

During a large part of the afternoon we watched a regiment of

Russian infantry move up the road into the high Vosges. The forests on these steep slopes are as thick as those in Germany's own Black Forest, and when the time comes to clean out the mountains, it will take something like the *Goumiers* from French Morocco to do the job. The Germans have a marked dislike for the *Goumiers*, who like to cut the ears off the men they kill.

The Russians traveled in the strangest collection of horse-drawn transport I have ever seen. They had everything from victorias to small-scale prairie schooners, and every vehicle was piled high with ammunition boxes, odd bundles of loot, stolen chickens and tools. Most of the Russians were unshaven and their uniforms were grease-streaked and dirty. They lounged on top of their baggage, looking dully ahead through the drizzle which had set in, munching bread and cheese and sausage.

They were not good quality Russian troops, not the sort of man who breached the Mannerheim Line when I was in Finland in the winter of 39-40, and most certainly not the type of man who held Stalingrad. I imagine they come from the green troops who were overwhelmed by the scores of thousands at the start of the great German offensive in Russia in 1941, and that they finally signed up for the German army on the theory that anything was preferable to the privation to which Russian prisoners are subjected.

We captured this sort of Russian by the thousands in Normandy. The Germans themselves have no illusions about their effectiveness as troops or their loyalty to Hitler, but they no longer have enough proven German troops to man the two huge fronts.

The Russians served as an object lesson for an overstuffed little captain in the Field Gendarmerie who strode into the cafe terrace, glowered when we failed to return his Hitler salute, perched himself on the edge of a table and began lecturing us in bad French and English about the evils of Communism and the foul designs of the democracies for the dismemberment of Germany.

This individual, slim as his foreign languages may have been, was well equipped with four-letter words, and since he apparently had dropped in because he had nothing better to do on a rainy afternoon, he used them over and over. His sense of humor was rudimentary. At one point he made an expressive gesture across the back of what Berlin correspondents used to call "the old three-ringer neck" and said that as far as he was concerned, all prisoners were a useless appendage these days and might just as well be put in the hands of the headsman.

In view of the fact that the Field Gendarmerie—the famous "green

police" who are responsible for order behind the fighting front—have an unenviable reputation for exactly that sort of thing in Russia and rank second only to the *Gestapo* as spreaders of Nazi culture, I decided it was prudent to avoid comment, and let him talk. My French friend, who is still very conscious of the weakness of his position, kept very quiet indeed. Finally the captain tired of his little game and left.

A few minutes ago, after a march under guard through town, we were pitched into the inky blackness of a room on the fourth floor of the old *Chasseurs Alpins* barracks in the center of town. In the few seconds of light before the door slammed, I thought we were to be left for the night with a collection of renegade Arabs from French North Africa. Since I am anxious to keep what few possessions I still have, I protested loudly and vainly to the Germans. The door slammed anyway.

A minute later I was thankful the conversation had been in German. A figure came clutching its way along my arm in the darkness, and said in a whisper:

"Please, sar, are you a British officer?"

I told him I was American, and that as a war correspondent I had officer's rank.

"We are seven men from the Fourth Indian Division, sar," the voice said. "We were taken at Tobruk over two years ago."

I was delighted to run into that sort of citizen. The Fourth Indian Division had one of the finest fighting records in the entire British Army. When I told my new friends that I had seen a lot of their division during the wind-up in Tunisia in 1943, forms converged on me from all sides, to shake hands and to heap in the crook of my arm several small packages. I tried one in the darkness and found it contained English cigarettes.

The Germans finally agreed to turn on the lights for a few minutes so we could bed down. I examined the rest of our loot and found more cigarettes, sardines and chocolate, François and I split it and consumed most of the food. We had had nothing all day but a small hunk of dry cheese left over from last night, and all requests for food had been shrugged off by the field police.

The Indians are all Sikhs. Some of them are fighting men, some regimental clerks. The spokesman has written down his address for me. He says it will be easy to contact him after the war. All I need do is send a letter to the following:

Sergeant-Clerk Bachan Singh "Behniwal"
Village: Chak No. 40 G.B.
P.O. Kotrajputan Chak No. 230 G.B.
Dist: Ljallpur
Punjab
India.

The Sikhs had been confined until September first at a big camp near Nancy. As the Americans approached, a break was organized. Several hundred men escaped, taking with them all the food they had hoarded, and these seven were at large until the seventeenth. At first the French farmers hid them. Finally, when the front approached, the French could no longer take the risk. The seven took to the woods. They were finally picked up by a patrol as they tried to cross a road only two miles from the American lines.

Bachan Singh says they are very glad "to be under command of an officer again." Since all seven treat me with the extreme respect of any good Indian soldier for his officers, it looks as though I'm elected. About all I can offer them is a command of the German language.

As befits my "rank," I have been given a bare bed-spring composed of a grillwork of flat iron strips, to use for the night. The Indians insist on it, and the man who was using it before won't hear of having it back. The others will sleep on the floor, and I wish I could, because the bed-spring has no attractions whatever.

The Germans just gave us a large slop bucket and then locked the door again, hermetically sealing the room. The light will go out in a moment. It's going to be a fine night.

Gerardmer,
SEPTEMBER 21

IT HAS become clear today that my week with the *Kampfgruppe Ottenbacher* represented the best sort of treatment a prisoner can expect to get, and that from now on we will be fed or otherwise cared for when and if someone feels in the mood.

Two or three people who had escaped from German prison camps and made their way back to England had told me that treatment at the hands of the fighting troops was generally good, that they normally gave you cigarettes and shared what food they had, but that once you struck the rear areas you met at the least, complete indifference, and at the worst, thievery and brutishness. Indifference is the trouble here.



German front-line soldiers, generally, are a lot of large, very healthy, and extremely determined-looking gentlemen who bristle with sub-machine guns, potato-masher grenades, and new-fangled surprise packages like Panzer Faust, and who as like as not will be offering you a cigarette ten minutes after capturing you.

I got up this morning and creaked to my feet feeling like a waffle after my battle with the bedspring. I suppose I may have slept three hours all night. The rest of the time I lay on the spring, aching and staring into the blackness. The only diversion came every hour or so, when someone stumbled across the room to use the slop bucket.

Thanks to the Sikhs, I was able to smoke from time to time, and I don't think a cigarette ever tasted so good before.

The Germans would not permit us to remove the blackout blinds until 8:00 A.M., by which time we had spent a good twelve hours without light and in a smell so foul it is impossible to describe. The smell had only one advantage over the darkness. After the first few hours I didn't notice it any more. When we finally got the window open this morning the fresh mountain air made me dizzy for a minute or two.

The Germans gave us nothing for breakfast but hot water; Bachan Singh produced some tea hoarded from Red Cross parcels and his cohorts dug around in their various bags and bundles and brought forth a few dozen plums and onions, which we munched more or less indiscriminately. The combination is not one I am planning to repeat when I can order for myself again.

There were two air alarms during the morning, each of which promptly cleared the big barracks square where reinforcements for the mountain front were assembling with all sorts of light equipment like mule-pack machine guns and mortars. Only one reconnaissance plane came over, and Gerardmer must have looked like just another collection of white-walled, red-roofed houses climbing from a little market square up the shoulders of the deep-green hills. The Germans, of course, take advantage of the fact that French towns are exempt from area bombing unless they are in the front lines, and regularly quarter troops in all available buildings in the centers.

When someone saw us watching the plane from the window, a German *Gefreite*, or corporal, pounded up the stairs, flung open the door, and began shouting and swearing in the loud-mouthed drillground tone which is theoretically reserved for orders but which inevitably creeps into any normal conversation in Prussia.

I stood it for thirty seconds or so and then got mad when we were accused of making signals out the window. In the most formal German I could muster, I informed him that I was an allied officer, that I was entitled to treatment as such, and that I did not intend to be shouted at by a mere corporal. I demanded to be taken to his superior to complain about our treatment, specifically his own demeanor.

It was quite a mouthful, and I flatter myself I was coldly dignified,

which is something of a job with two days' growth of beard and a couple of upper layers of Vosges topsoil and barracks dirt. Whether he was caught off guard because somebody could talk back to him, or whether all the verbiage had the desired effect, the *Gefreite* deflated completely, assured me there was no need to see the captain on duty because he himself would see at once about lunch. He added that he had both a father and a stepfather in New York, but that probably I wouldn't know them. I said probably not, trying to make it look as though the relatives in question had better watch out if we didn't get lunch pretty darned quickly.

The corporal left, turning at the door to ask us to stay away from the windows "to avoid trouble for everyone"—obviously meaning himself.

The Sikhs seemed to have admired my technique (which, at that, may be useful on future occasions) and Bachan Singh asked me to do what I can to get them back to a regular camp away from the zone of air attack and in contact with regular Red Cross parcels. The Sikhs do not eat beef, which their religion forbids, and they receive special parcels which have a large amount of fish, sweets, and other permissible foods. He says that the Germans have consistently refused since their recapture to vary the beef and noodle diet—on those occasions when they have troubled to give them food at all.

Personally, I have found it pretty hard on most occasions to find the meat in the noodles or the soup, but religious scruples may sharpen the taste buds.

My friend produced fifty more battered Player's cigarettes, which are like manna from Heaven. When I protested at the gift and told him neither François or myself had anything to give in exchange, he explained that Sikhs are also forbidden to smoke and keep their cigarettes for trading purposes, but that they were glad to give them to us.

When lunch finally arrived, it was beef and noodles. The Germans shrugged disinterestedly when I told them the Sikhs must be given something without beef. François and I had enough for nine men, but the stuff was so tasteless that we were unable to eat very much. We are just not hungry enough yet, but if the indifferent attitude of these behind-the-lines troops is any sample of the treatment which lies ahead, we soon shall be.

At 4:30 P.M. the door swung open, and the corporal appeared with the news that we were to be taken to new billets. They mustered us downstairs and we marched off in parade formation, carrying our bag-

gage, our blankets, and various containers which were to be used to hold future soup issues, if any.

The procession must have been quite a sight. First strode the corporal. Then came two guards with rifles. I led the enemy platoon, unencumbered except for my musette bag, my coat, my blanket, and my tin cup. Next came François, carrying a blanket plus a large white china soup tureen in which were the remains of the beef and noodles, now congealed. Following came the Sikhs, who already had been hung about with a great variety of old tin cans, cups, water jars, canteens, bags and blankets, and who between them now bore two more soup tureens, the slop pail, two large jugs and a big garbage can which, aptly enough, is what we apparently are to draw our soup ration in.

The population of Gerardmer loved our parade, and several small boys trooped alongside. The German guards, a particularly glum-looking quartette, seemed trying to pretend they had nothing to do with us.

The small boys were obviously particularly intrigued by the Sikhs' well-brushed beards and their neat, tightly-wrapped turbans. Those fellows manage to look like thorough soldiers even while prisoners. I will not dwell on any impression, military or otherwise, which François and I may have made.

While the small boys and their mothers and their cousins crowded around the big plate glass doors, we were herded into the ground floor of what had once been a Jewish department store, later the Vichy institute for physical culture, and given a couple of big bales of grass with which to make beds for the night.

We got no food tonight. Apparently any move, even one of a half mile or so, is sufficient excuse to cancel out on a meal.

Later: Just as I dropped off to sleep about 9 P.M., the door opened and a couple of obviously disgusted German guards ushered in thirty-three Americans of all shapes and sizes, all of them tired and all in one stage or another of disrepair. They were dirty and footsore and very hungry indeed, but they were a very welcome sight as far as I was concerned.

Lieutenant Bob Thompson of Stigler, Oklahoma is the only officer with them. The whole bunch were captured in small batches near Ramiremont this morning, and have been marching most of the time since.

After considerable grumbling, the Germans provided several gallons of *ersatz* coffee, but nothing to drink it from. We made do with a few GI canteen cups and what the Indians and I could chip in. Thompson, who waited until last for his coffee, took a gulp and exploded:

"My God, don't they know that nobody could hope to win a war on that stuff?"

After considerable rushing around in circles, the Germans announced that the new arrivals would be questioned tonight. This was to be done by an officer whose English was almost non-existent. I offered to act as interpreter but was told to run away to my corner.

The prisoners were all lined up and the questioning began. It became quite clear that the officer intended not only to get the usual name, rank and serial number, which is all prisoners can be required to give under the Geneva Convention, but to sound out each man on politics as well. The process ran to about fifteen minutes per man, and I finally persuaded the Germans to let those standing in line lie down until their turn came.

The majority promptly dropped like logs onto the grass, but six hardier Joes promptly started a poker game, using a pack of cards which the Sikhs found somewhere in their inexhaustible knapsacks.

There is now considerable indignation hereabouts at the fact that as each man is questioned, all his money is confiscated. The net result is that the interrogation officer ended up with all the poker winnings, and the men have nothing to show but a few scribbled receipts, which probably won't ever be good for much. Strangely enough, nobody yet has taken my money. They probably will before long.

It is 2:30 A.M. now, and the questioning finally has died down. I have taken the names and addresses of all thirty-three, with the hope that if I am exchanged quickly I can get in touch with their families and tell them, at least, that their sons or husbands were unwounded and safe when I last saw them.

The Germans, leaving for the night, have just warned us that the sentry outside the front door will shoot if anyone opens it before daylight. They needn't worry. None of us looks capable of moving until long after that time.

Gerardmer

SEPTEMBER 22

WHEN lunch today turned out to be pea soup with a few chunks of beef, the Germans actually said they were very sorry about the Sikhs, but that they could do nothing about it. Fortunately, one of the GI prisoners had a tin of chopped pork and egg from the army rations, and gave it to them although it must have been a terrible wrench. The rest of us chipped in a bit of our skimpy bread ration, which would amount

to somewhere around four slices for twenty-four hours, so the Indians did reasonably well and seem much happier about life.

Tonight we were given a sort of gruel, which tasted like little or nothing to the American contingent. The Indians, at least, were absolutely blissful.

With the permission of the guards, I succeeded this morning in getting a bar of laundry soap and a couple of towels from a French family on the second floor, and everyone had a wash which did a lot for morale. When we were alone for two or three minutes, the French-women crowded around me and asked excitedly how long it would be before the Americans arrived. I said it would be soon. One of them had a husband who had been a prisoner in Germany since 1940. She asked when I thought she would see him again. With a confidence I had begun to stop feeling, I told her the campaign would probably be over in a few weeks, and that the prisoners would be coming home soon afterward. They wanted to give me some cake and sugar for the fellows downstairs, but the French have been eating too poorly to take advantage of that sort of generosity.

Three more prisoners were brought in this morning. One of them is Major Kermit Hansen of Omaha, Nebraska, who was taken during a crossing of the Moselle River, our worst stumbling block in Eastern France. Another batch of thirty-three arrived tonight, and the Germans kept us carefully segregated from them until their questioning could be completed. There is always the chance of catching somebody off guard and picking up a little new information, although the Germans are remarkably well filled-in, from all I can gather, on troop dispositions and the like.

One of the favorite tricks is to take a man's name, rank and serial number, chat with him a few minutes, and then say: "Now, we want to return all your papers, but it will be difficult to do so once you are in prison camp. Perhaps if you could tell us how to locate your unit we can send them through it, and your commander can also see your family is notified immediately." Not many GI's fall for that one.

Major Hansen was given a very thorough and persistent questioning, and came back downstairs smiling quietly. I asked him what technique he used on the Germans.

"I give them my name, rank and serial number," he said, "and when they ask me anything else, I give them my name, rank and serial number a second time. After that I just give them a very sweet smile at each question, and say nothing."

We have been troubled all day by lack of air. It would be possible

to keep the front door open in the interests of ventilation, except for the fact that half the population of Gerardmer would be inside with us. The steps outside have been crowded all day with women and children waving and smiling at the GI's the other side of the big glass doors, and the GI's have been making faces and winking back at them. One little boy even brought a big bottle of water, although that's one thing we have in quantity. The guards have been trying to ignore the demonstration, but every once in awhile it gets too noticeable, and the crowd is chased away. It's back again in five or ten minutes.

The Germans have finally agreed to let us give first aid, such as we can, to the thirty-three late arrivals, many of whom have bad blisters and two or three of whom are walking wounded. Otherwise, they will get nothing tonight, no food, no coffee, no grass to sleep on, and because of the nonfraternization rule, we can't give them any of ours or share it with them. Since they have marched twenty miles today on top of the exhausting experience of capture, they need food and beds much worse than we do.

There is artillery fire plainly audible tonight, but sound is so tricky in the mountains that we can't tell how far away it is. It's a safe bet it's too far to do us any good. We're not apt to be here more than thirty-six hours more at the most, and our next move is likely to be to Colmar, just west of the Rhine, where we'll be well out of reach of anything but a major breakthrough.

Colmar

SEPTEMBER 23

THIS entry is being written in a four-storeyed Bedlam by the light of one little candle, the only illumination available for the sixty of us the Germans shipped out of Gerardmer this morning. The candle was furnished by a resourceful GI, not by the Germans who run this so-called transit camp for prisoners from the southern half of the front, and who quite clearly are annoyed by each batch of new arrivals.

Fifty-two Americans, the seven Sikhs and the Frenchman were loaded into two trucks late this morning in another persistent drizzle. Three Germans were perched on the tailboard of each truck. I sat next to Major Hansen, who as senior officer was in command of the party. Even Hansen, who is a normally cheerful person, was glum at the uncertainty ahead of us.

The road wound upward through the dripping forest and at the summit of the pass suddenly swung sharp around the shoulder of the

mountain. There was a sign saying *Reichsgrenze*—the new border of Hitler's empire. Formerly all the land sweeping down to the Rhine before us had been French: it was Alsace, old battleground of Frenchman and German, which had fallen to Hitler four years ago as it had to Bismarck in 1871. Now it must be reconquered once again.

The Germans are already bracing themselves. These massive hills and steep forests make ideal defensive country and all along the road today the Germans were moving up toward their positions against the expected American attack. The first thing which struck me was that these were not the tired, middle-aged men who had been left to fight rearguard actions west of the Vosges. They were for the most part young men, and even the older ones looked fresh and newly-equipped. The troops we saw must have represented the new military age group plus the sweepings from civilian life and war industry gained by the latest reallocation of manpower.

These troops had plenty of automatic weapons, and it seemed as though every second man carried the *Panzerfaust* or one of the deadly German mortar tubes, but there was remarkably little artillery. There was almost no transport, except for a few straggling horse-drawn columns made up indiscriminately of military and civilian waggons.

I suppose the northern sector, from the Dutch coast around to Aachen, has first priority on all equipment, and that this area ranks a bad third to the Metz-Nancy-Toul triangle, where the Germans must hold at all costs, but even so the shortage of heavy weapons is remarkable. I recall a remark of Major Roewer's a few days ago: "There is plenty of materiel inside the Reich, including great supplies of weapons of all kinds, but it is becoming next to impossible to get it into the hands of the fighting soldiers against the incessant air attacks. To think that we should be let down by the arm we conceived, the arm which was to assure our victory."

Shortage of equipment, unfortunately, is not nearly the problem here it would be in more friendly country. There is almost no chance for tanks to operate in the Vosges, and even artillery will be badly handicapped because of the density of the forests. Taking these mountains will be a job for the infantry, and the German troops we saw today are well-equipped for Indian-style fighting.

We are quartered here for the night on the fourth storey of a former factory whose huge floor and roof beams still show the holes where the heavy machinery was bolted fast. We suspect the Germans removed the machinery into the Reich proper, when they retook Alsace.

The lower three floors are an absolute uproar. Only the camp com-

mandant knows how many Poles, Russians and Italians he has there. Certainly there are many hundred. They crowded the dirty windows as we arrived, waving and smiling, and they have managed to smuggle upstairs to us a few cigarettes. They are employed in small groups either in workshops in Colmar, on the roads, or in the forests. The Poles, who have been prisoners a full five years, are the best looking of the lot, and are as toughly anti-German as ever. Most of them have managed to preserve some item of uniform, usually one of the rakish, diamond-topped peaked caps, to identify themselves as Poles. The Italians have fairly full uniform, but of course most of them have been "inside" only a year. The Russians are dressed in an ugly conglomeration of ragged fragments of uniform. A Pole told me the Germans purposely give them all sorts of cast-offs, in an effort to make them look ludicrous to the civilian population.

The only sanitary facilities available for the entire camp are a couple of water faucets out in the barbed wire yard, and a long open trench with a bar running down the middle. None of these is reachable at night, and we found that previous occupants of our floor had been forced to use a far corner as a latrine. The Germans had not bothered to clean it up, and the smell is fierce. Fortunately, the sixty of us need only a small part of the big floor space, and we have concentrated as far from the smell as possible.

We have lumpy straw sacks slung on the floor as mattresses, which is considerably better than any of us has had to date. There are still no blankets. The Germans did produce the best supper we have seen yet, a potato and cabbage stew which was not all water, bread, *ersatz* marmalade and *ersatz* tea. We also scraped together enough marks to buy ten bottles of pretty watery beer, which a friendly guard carried in to us from outside. For purposes of dividing the bread, which comes in large, very tough loaves, we split into five eating groups of twelve each. We were told the bread must last until tomorrow noon, when we should be in Strasbourg, but there is just about enough per man to make an average GI sandwich, and most of us have worked on the theory that it's easier to eat it now and forget it.

The dusty windowpanes here are covered with fingertip scrawls. A few I have noticed are "Sept. 22, 1944," "Flint, Mich.," "Chicago," "Wilmington," "Los Angeles," "West Virginia"—our predecessors obviously were Americans. There are also a couple of very uncomplimentary caricatures of one Adolf Hitler and one pretty unsuccessful attempt to render a pin-up girl with a knife point in the soft, white-washed plaster of the wall.

We have been told we must get up at 4:30 A.M. to start for Strasbourg. According to the guards here, we probably will not remain there more than a day or two, and then will go on to a permanent camp at Limburg an der Lahn, just east of the Rhine a short distance upstream from Koblenz. Nobody is in any hurry for that to happen. Once we cross the Rhine our chances of recapture become very small indeed, and escape, which everyone contemplates sooner or later, would involve swimming a wide, fast river or making for the Swiss border, a long, long distance away.

Outside Strasbourg
SEPTEMBER 24

FOR a half hour we have been stuck here while antiaircraft on the outskirts of this old Alsatian city fired fitfully at three or four American fighter planes which dove in and out of the high-banked clouds. It has been a nervous sort of half hour, because it is quite obvious that if our train were attacked, the German guards would not let us scatter for safety. Trains are a number-one priority on the list of tactical air targets these days. The Germans were moving nothing by rail in France all summer, except for a few tortured trains which scuttled east during the night, and the devastation of the French railway system had a lot to do with the hamstringing of Rommel's and von Kluge's armies in the campaign just ended. The railroads operating north and south along both banks of the Rhine, one of which we used in getting here from Colmar this morning, are the first we have seen running in weeks.

They are next in line for the paralysing attack of air power, and as we came up through the fruitful Rhine plan we saw evidence that the first skirmishes in the battle have already started. At three different points strings of cars, riddled, blasted or burned out, stood on sidings where they had been dragged when the planes dove down on them with rockets and air cannon to turn them into collanders and to kill their locomotives in a flurry of scalding steam.

On other sidings, preferably protected by trees, stood lines of box and flat cars waiting for something to haul them. All were camouflaged, like the motor convoys near the front, with leafy branches or under big nets hung with strips of green and brown burlap.

We heard the sirens go when the planes first came over, and they caught us right at the entrance to Strasbourg's big freight yards, one of the likeliest targets. Fortunately for our sake, the train is again in motion now, and the fighters presumably are out of the area. Whether

they were on reconnaissance or had some target elsewhere, they did no strafing around here. On the highway a couple of hundred yards west of us, occasional military cars are getting into gear again and creeping out from under the roadside trees. German army drivers must spend a large part of their time "in the ditch" these days. I remember how often we used to dash for the fields in Tunisia, less than two years ago, when the Germans for a few weeks had air superiority on their side.

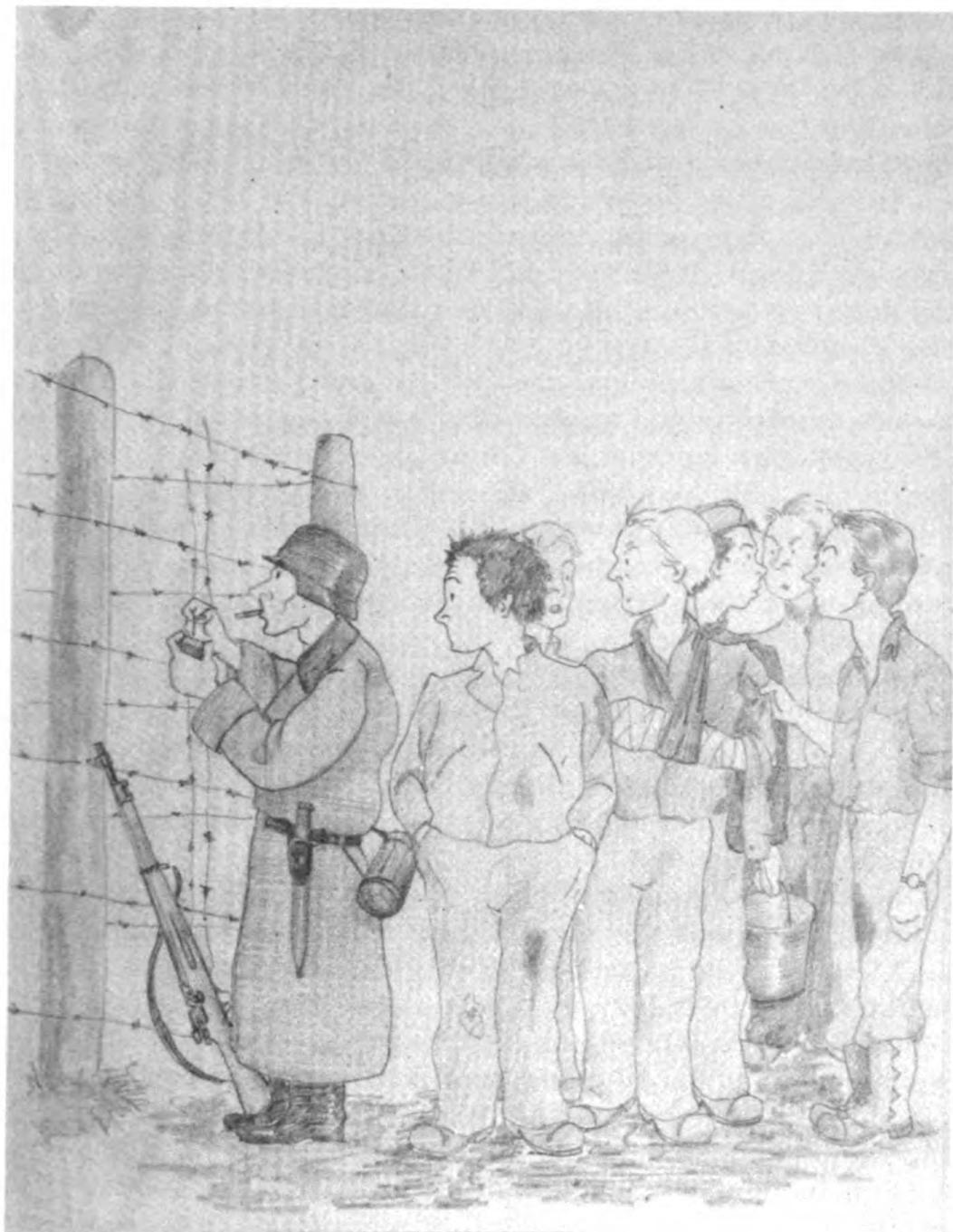
They marched us two miles through the darkness of Colmar this morning, and after an hour and a half wait, we piled into a third class car on the end of a local bound north along the Rhine's west bank. We consider ourselves lucky to have had seats. According to all reports, box cars are the normal means of transport for prisoners, and nobody is keen to try them.

The flat plain which runs from the Vosges to the riverbank looked very bountiful in the early morning sunlight. All the farms looked prosperous and peaceful. Their fields seemed planted chiefly in corn, potatoes and root crops, including big areas of sugar beets. There were fruit orchards off toward the hills to our left, and nearly every farmhouse had its private tobacco field. Through open barn doors we could see big bunches of dried, yellow tobacco leaves hanging in the deep shadow. German civilians may be rationed to sixty cigarettes a month but the farmers obviously are taking care of their own supply.

Our carload has been remarkably cheerful all morning. The average GI seems to recover quickly from the shock of capture, and to regain his normal high spirits. Outside of a lot of pretty lurid griping about the lack of breakfast, the crowd has been joking all the way up, and for a short time there was even a barbershop quartette which seemed to have the stolid guards pretty puzzled.

The great shortage at the moment is cigarettes. This morning, we are down to the last bedraggled specimens from the bottoms of various pockets, and we pass them around in the compartments, a drag per man per round, to make them go as far as possible. Everyone shares without question. We hope that the camp at Strasbourg will have Red Cross parcels, which nobody has ever seen but which, by all accounts, have a lot of food and a good ration of cigarettes. Each prisoner is supposed to get a parcel per week.

I amused myself for a while coming up on the train by running through the names and addresses I have already collected in the back of this book. They include the following names: Hansen, Meadows, Czyzykiewicz, Capponi, Adams, Genovese, Schaubel, Mostel, Hewett, McClusky, de Silva, Anderson, McKenzie. In this small group, then,



For the first three days to month—until they settle down to life in a permanent camp—new prisoners look lost. They are long on hair and short on everything else—short on hope, short on clothes, and, God, how short on cigarettes!

there is the blood of England, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Portugal and Palestine. Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois, Texas, New York, West Virginia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Missouri, Oklahoma, California, Nebraska and Idaho are all represented.

All in all, it is a good cross section, racially and geographically, of the American fighting man. Some of the men, like Major Hansen, are veterans of North Africa, Italy and France. Some had just come up to the line as replacements, and had seen almost no combat before they were captured.

Some of them know that they were captured through no fault of their own, that they had fought well and were bagged only because on some small sector or other, the Germans were too strong. A few, like myself, feel a little bit foolish at being in this sort of fix, because it might have been avoided with a little more foresight or a little more care by one person or another. A few are still bitter because they were thrown into an impossible situation, and feel that their commanding officers should have known better.

Without exception, everyone in the group came very close to death before capture, and most saw friends killed to one side or another in the last desperate minutes. That in itself creates a strong bond between these fifty-two Americans, or for that matter between the Americans, the seven Sikhs and the Frenchman. Most of us have known each other less than four days.

In a big camp, a group like this will soon lose its identity. At the moment, uncertainty over the future keeps us very close-knit.

The men have not yet completely found themselves, because the psychological wrench has been terrific and they are still insecure and confused. But they are not afraid of the Germans or anyone else. They are not going to knuckle down, and with the soldier's gift for improvisation, they will make a dismal experience as tolerable as it can be made.

Food is the uppermost thought in all minds. Our experiences to date with the German prison diet have not been encouraging, and we have all been captured long enough by now to start getting hungry. But the great, underlying worry for everyone is the family back home.

In the normal course of events, all prisoners are listed temporarily as "missing in action," and wives and parents are so notified. Until the Germans can inform the International Red Cross in Geneva, and the Red Cross in turn can cable Washington, there is no way for the War Department to establish the fate of anyone beyond the dead and

wounded who remain in American hands. The process obviously will require weeks, and during those weeks a prisoner must sit idly behind barbed wire with the knowledge that back home his family is spending sleepless nights and waiting in hope and dread each day for news.

I consider myself lucky, because Mecklin's and Bryan's release should mean that my mother knew within three days or so that I was a prisoner and safe, not dead or wounded. She won't know how I am to be treated—I shall not know, myself, until I discover whether I am classed as a military prisoner or whether there is "special treatment" reserved for correspondents who, in Nazi parlance, are considered "politically unreliable" or who are "international well-poisoners." As far as I know, war correspondents have always been given the military status to which they are entitled by international agreement, and thus have kept clear of the terrible German political prison system. I hope somebody tells Mother that.

The rest of the group had nobody to carry back word they were alive, and they would gladly go without food or water if somebody at the camp in Strasbourg would give them each a card they could send home, with just the bare word that they are not dead, and that some day they will be free men again.

Strasbourg
SEPTEMBER 27

THE two-day lapse in entries represents the time during which this little book was confiscated and, for all I knew, burned. I have tried to confine it to facts and details which would later recall to my mind scenes and events and the train of thought which went with them. All along, I have felt that its chances of survival were pretty questionable, and I mentally kissed it good-bye when we arrived here three days ago and it, with everything else of value I still had, was taken away.

Today a mild, English-speaking corporal who had searched me from head to foot, including the seams of my clothes and the inner soles of my boots, returned the book with the suggestion that I should be a little less open in future and rely more on my memory "when you are in a happier position." He said there is no objection to diaries as such, but that much depends on the mood of the censor.

We have been famished the entire three days we have been here, and there is no prospect of betterment until they get enough Americans together to warrant the allocation of box-cars to take us on to Limburg. There must be 200 GI's here now, and there are a total of

sixteen American and three French officers. Batches in varying strength seem to come in every day or two. Many of them are wounded and for all the camp doctor cares, they can die of their wounds if they so desire. His attitude is typical of the complete indifference to any wants or needs of the prisoners which characterizes the entire German staff.

These individuals once ran what they call a "model civilian internment camp" at Vittel, in France. They say it was so good that Winston Churchill once praised it in a speech in Commons. That fact has been thrown at us with great unction at every complaint we have made, and we usually have a long list of gripes ready by inspection time each morning. The camp at Vittel may have been "model" and Captain von Landhausen, who brought his staff here with him, may have been most admirable. Apparently they were so pleased with themselves when they left Vittel in the face of the American advance that they decided to rest on their laurels. I will try to let details of life in this transit camp speak for the ability and the willingness of the captain and his men to give prisoners proper treatment. We had our first sample of their technique almost the moment we met them, and have been getting more of the same ever since.

We arrived in Strasbourg in mid-morning, and were lined up on the station platform in a crowd of soldiers on leave, peasant wives in for market, and party officials in overelaborate uniforms and the ubiquitous brief cases which at first glance seem to stamp every German as a lawyer or bank president, but which on closer acquaintance usually turn out to contain nothing but his lunchtime sandwiches. Our eight or ten guards marched us off. Nobody seemed curious about us at all.

Strasbourg is a delightful city of cobbled streets and quiet waterways whose narrow, steep-roofed old buildings are dominated by one of the world's greatest cathedrals. Nobody ever would have called it pure French: there always had been a strong German influence. Alsace is like that. But when I had seen the city last, ten weeks before Germany attacked Poland, when the French troops were already in the main forts of the Maginot Line and the Germans across the Rhine at Kehl were working night and day at the pillboxes of the *Westwall*, it had been predominantly French.

Thousands of civilians had already been evacuated for fear of a point-blank bombardment across the river, and the city was dying on its feet. But it still had a certain air about it and people smiled in the streets, and the shops had pretty display windows.

Three days ago, as we marched through in column of threes, it

struck me that everything was dull gray, in color, in atmosphere and in the expressions on people's faces. War brings drabness and uniformity to any country in one degree or another, but Paris on August 25, the day of the Liberation, was pulsing with life and color, and it was not just the joy of a people freed from the enemy. It's a knack the French have to make the best of things.

Strasbourg today is pure German and the people in the streets, insofar as they are not Alsatians whose sympathies lay with Germany or who were blackmailed into returning during the occupation, are Germans imported from the Reich to Germanize the province. It is glum and pasty-faced and self-centered, centered on the multitude of food, clothing and living regulations which govern the existence of each German.

We hadn't expected to find people waving at the prisoner column as they did the other side of the Vosges, because this was Germany proper, as far as Hitler and the Gestapo were concerned, and anyone who might have been sympathetic would have been extremely foolhardy to show it. We weren't quite prepared for the complete lack of interest shown by the Germans. A few of us probably had had visions of hooting crowds, or at least of a few small boys running along beside us and jeering. We got complete apathy.

They took us first to the old fortress of Strasbourg, a series of massive, stone-faced, earth-topped structures half sunk in the ground and long since outmoded for war-making. It had been turned into a prison, and from behind the barbed wire enclosures thrown up at the entrances to the old works, soldiers of all nations shouted or waved or saluted or bowed at us, according to their inclination. We identified Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, French, Poles, Russians and Americans. A couple of New Zealanders tossed us a few cigarettes.

Our column was marching in step, but there its resemblance to a parade stopped. Nobody had a complete uniform. At least half were in shirtsleeves. Some had caps, some had steel helmets, and most had no head covering at all. Many trousers and shirts were torn, and almost all were dirty. Nobody had shaved, and everyone was tired and hungry. Certainly we were not prepared for the attempt to domineer which a certain German captain tried on us.

He strutted out of the guard house as we came into the compound, shouted something at a one-armed corporal who wore the Russian campaign ribbon and the badge of the assault troops. The corporal started for the column screaming orders in German, rushed up to a soldier three rows behind me, pulled from his pocket a tin can which several

men had been using as an eating utensil, and hurled it to one side. Then he put his one fist on a hip and screamed some more.

I was marching beside Major Hansen, where my German would be at his disposal when necessary.

"Please tell the German captain to address any complaints to me and to leave my men alone," Hansen said quietly.

I translated.

The captain turned to Hansen grumbling that we all looked so disreputable he couldn't be expected to pick out the officers, and bawled:

"In the future, keep your men at attention, and march them properly. This is the worst looking bunch of nondescripts I have ever seen."

Hansen blew up.

"Tell him," he said to me, "that he should take a look some time at a few thousand of the German prisoners I have seen."

I suggested that this would just infuriate the German—I wish now I had translated it verbatim.

"All right," Hansen said, "tell him that as a Major I am not accustomed to be addressed in those tones by a captain, and that I certainly won't be shouted at by corporals."

The German captain whuffed a little when I translated, but there were no more yells. He went into conference with the sergeant of the guard, and it developed that there was no room for us in the old fortifications. We marched off again and eventually reached our present quarters, a French military hospital which has been turned into a transit camp. It lies on the western edge of town, and from the windows we can see the balloon barrage which protects the Rhine bridge between Strasbourg and Kehl, on the east bank.

First we were deloused, a process which involves stripping for two hours while your clothes are put through a hot air chamber. In the interim, we were given a hot shower, the first for any one of us since capture, and left to wander around barefoot on a filthy cement floor. When our clothes were returned, we were searched.

The search was directed by an elderly lieutenant from the First World War who possessed all the elegance and polish of the old school and all the indifference of the new. He had a crew of surly soldiers to do the heavy work.

Everything was examined minutely, down to the shoes on our feet, and a large quantity of private papers or property which had been returned by the soldiers at the front was tossed into a pile on the floor with no excuse whatever. Because I could speak German, I demanded

why they were taking my automatic pencil, my cigarette lighter, a can opener and a nail file.

"It's orders," I was told, "and the can opener and nail file might be escape implements."

They took all my money and travelers' cheques as well, even down to a string of "short snorter" banknotes carrying two or three hundred signatures, including most of the American ground force Generals from Eisenhower in London to Terry Allen in Tunis, plus a few unpopular civilians like Anthony Eden, Ambassador Tony Biddle and a couple of Soviet Russian diplomats. I wondered whether anyone would ever bother to look at the signatures, and whether if so they would want to ask a lot more questions.

I asked for a receipt for the articles taken. A soldier in his fifties who spoke adequate English stepped up. He was a man who had been a chocolate manufacturer in Frankfurt-am-Main until his factory was destroyed in an air raid, and who has since become the chief front man for the camp commandant—alibi artist would be a better term.

"You will of course get a receipt within a day or two," he said, "and all your possessions will be quite safe. You would get the receipt now except that we have just taken over this camp within the past twenty-four hours and are quite confused ourselves. We must get the receipts printed and then you shall have them. We ran a model camp at Vittel, and I can assure you that you will get the best possible treatment."

Soldiers are accustomed to losing their watches when they are captured, and often their fountain pens or other small articles which the guard can appropriate without attracting undue notice. Anything which is army issue can be legally taken. But the Germans took from Major Hansen a heavy gold ring set with a large ruby. When Hansen protested he was told it would be quite safe, and that it was only being taken because it might be used to bribe his way out of prison camp. He vainly protested that it was a family heirloom with which he would never think of parting.

We have not yet gotten our receipts, and do not expect to get them. The former candy manufacturer, who has been nicknamed Rudolf on the vague theory that all Germans without moustaches are called Rudolf, and all with moustaches, Adolf, assures us twice daily that they will be forthcoming, and then tells us what a nice camp they had at Vittel.

Just after the delousing, François was rushed off to parts unknown. I have tried to find out at least whether he is all right, but have gotten nowhere. He didn't know himself what was in store for him.

"The pigs are taking me off," he said. Then he shook hands and left. All his fears must have come back on him in that moment.

The three French officers, Captain Philippe Monge of Gabes, Tunisia, Lieutenant Gabriel Fulchiron, from the Rhone valley, and Aspirant Bernard Delalande, from Normandy, were serving with the French forces on the south flank of the advance toward Belfort and the Swiss border. The Germans here say that the French have done some very fine fighting, and the one or two papers I have managed to lay hands on show considerable anxiety for the Belfort gap, which must be kept open if the Germans are to pull out of eastern France.

The thirteen new American officers were all taken in the area west of Belfort. They had been here for several days before we arrived, and were kept in the old fortress. They report that the prisoners of other nationalities there had been getting American Red Cross packages, which they shared with the newcomers, so everyone here is hopeful that we'll get some of our own. It's hard to tell at the moment what would be most welcome, the food, the cigarettes, or the soap.

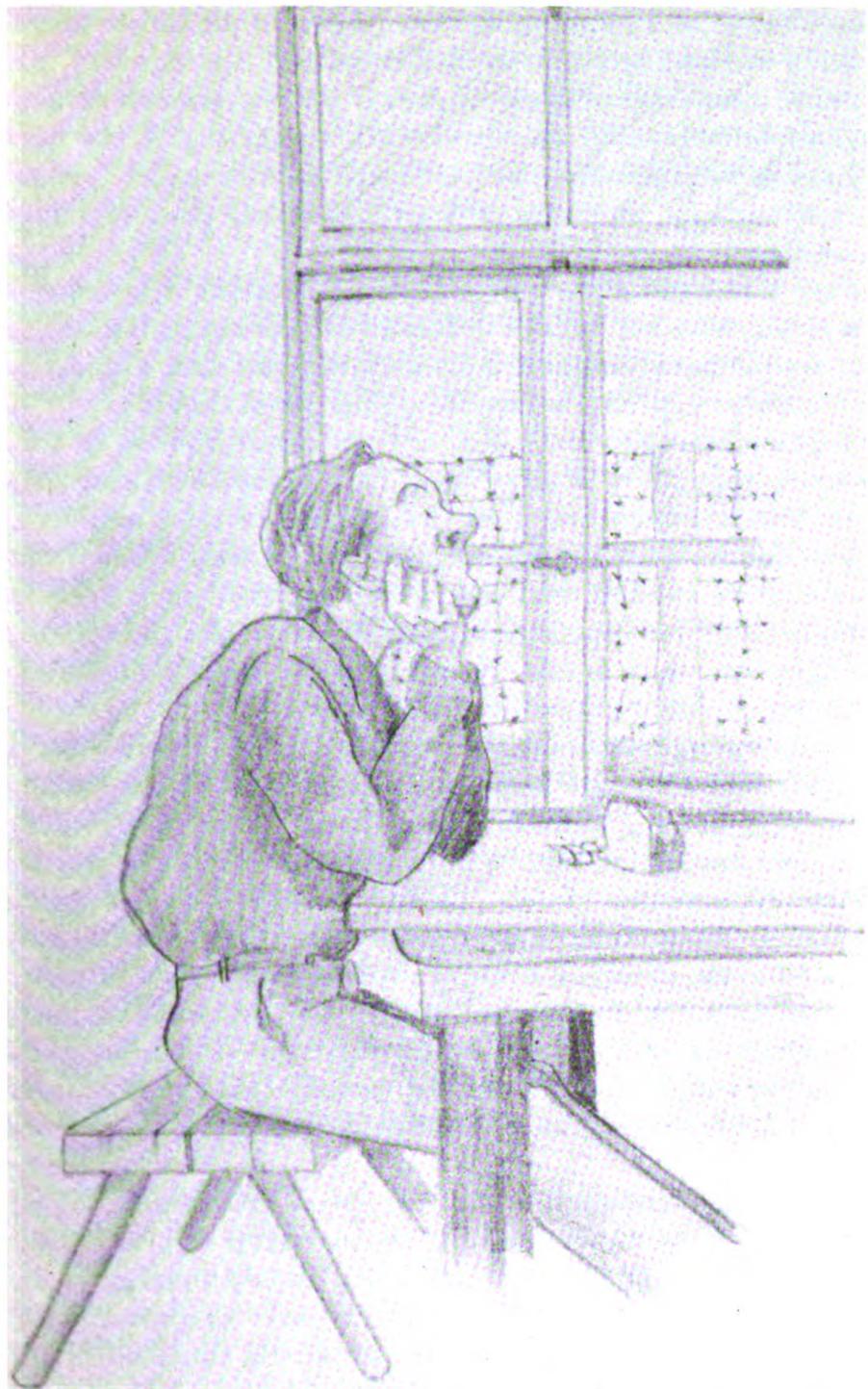
Poles, Serbs and Frenchmen in this camp have all smuggled smokes and small bits of food in to us since our arrival, and a lot of it comes from American parcels. Major Hansen requested parcels for us, and was told that things of course are still very disorganized, but that someone certainly will see whether packages can't be brought in. There are allegedly none here.

The story held water for twenty-four hours or so, until it became obvious that all the German guards are smoking either Camels or Chesterfields, and until we noticed that the Italian prisoners who act as orderlies in the German living quarters carry out to the dump heap each morning a large quantity of American corned beef, powdered milk and other cans which could only have originated in Red Cross parcels.

When I confronted Rudolf with that slight discrepancy, he said that the guards had no doubt "been given the cigarettes by grateful prisoners." He denies the fact, to which several Russians testify, that Red Cross parcels are stacked high in a certain room to which ordinary prisoners have no access.

There is no doubt in anyone's mind that the Germans, in areas where the Red Cross can't keep a proper check, steal prisoners' packages for their own use. I know of at least two instances where advancing American units captured parcels by the railway carload right up at the front. They certainly weren't there because the Germans expected to take a lot of prisoners and wanted to make them feel at home at once.

There are at the most, two or three razors among the nineteen offi-



No, he is not thinking of that girl around the block, of home and mother, or anything else but food—specifically, the first Red Cross package.

cers quartered in four rooms in an isolated part of the camp, where we have each a bed with straw mattress, a sheet, and two blankets. There are, I think, three cakes of soap, courtesy of older prisoners. There are almost no toothbrushes or toothpaste. We are sharing as best we can the few things we possess, but we have asked the Germans to get us the proper toilet articles, which are made available to all prisoners through the Red Cross.

We are told twice a day that everyone is working very hard on a canteen at which we will be able to buy all sorts of nice things, but that we must realize that even a bunch of men which ran such a model camp at Vittel can't be expected to conjure things out of thin air.

The GI's are quartered across a large courtyard from us in barrack rooms where they sleep on straw sacks on the floor with one blanket per man, and are much worse off than we are because nobody even bothers to alibi to them. Since our only contact with them is during air alarms (of which there are three or four per day) when everyone is herded out either into open trenches in the courtyard or into an unlighted basement which would certainly collapse under a direct hit, we have not yet been able to do anything for them.

Next to nothing is done for the wounded, either. There must be at least twenty GI's who have wounds of one sort or another, including two with very bad leg wounds who must be carried everywhere on stretchers. In our section there is only one wound, but it is one which might have serious complications. Captain James W. Coles of Encinitas, California, a veteran of Anzio beachhead and a dozen other bloody affairs, was hit in the chest just before he was captured. By a miracle, the bullet traveled across his ribs and tore its way out without touching anything vital, and with decent medical attention the cure would have been relatively simple. Coles is not getting that attention, and although he has an iron constitution and is steadily getting better he suffers a lot of pain.

When we first arrived the German doctor confronted us, glared through glasses a quarter of an inch thick, warned us that "if any of you has venereal disease and fails to report it, it's his own funeral," and left. Since then he has been visible only once, when he appeared in the courtyard, ordered two of us off a bench in the sun which we had been told we could use, and lay down for a nap. An Italian doctor tells us he flatly refuses to have anything to do with wounded prisoners, no matter how serious their case.

He also refuses to make available even the most rudimentary medical supplies and equipment, although he has a well-stocked dispensary

of his own. The Italian doctor, who dresses Coles' wound each day, has a few swabs, a bottle of iodine and some paper bandage at his disposal, and as far as I can determine, not much else. All he can do for Coles is to run a swab doused in iodine through from where the bullet entered to where it burst out, and rewrap the old bandage. Once he found enough material for a new one.

The GI stretcher cases get about the same sort of treatment. They would be much worse off except for two British medical orderlies who were captured on a stretcher-carrying detail at the front many months ago, and who although they are protected personnel, seem to have no prospects of repatriation. These men, one of whom is a Quaker, spend sixteen or eighteen hours a day doing what they can for all the sick prisoners, scrounging odd bits of food for soups for those who are ill, and making what progress they can with the wounds. If there is an air alarm in darkness, as there is almost every night, they get the stretcher cases down into the cellar almost before the sound prisoners have left bed. They are the most cheerful men in the camp, and a real example to everyone else.

The food here is abominable, and nothing we can do has any effect on the Germans. The Germans issue their food for the most part in odd lots, and it's up to us to divide it as best we can. The daily ration includes about a quarter pint of vivid red *ersatz* jam, a by-product of coal, a quarter pound of margarine from the same source, and a quarter pound of beet sugar, to be divided among twelve men. Each man gets a loaf of bread weighing just over two pounds to last him six days. That means two or at the most three slices a day, and it's very hard for a hungry man to stop there in order to save for the days until a new loaf is issued. At noon we get something around a pint apiece of a gray soup composed of unidentifiable vegetables with an occasional shred of meat, and completely without seasoning. We get *ersatz* tea in the morning.

The bread is so heavy, wet and sour that at present I can eat it only as long as the tiny margarine and jam ration holds out, but older prisoners say that as the weeks go by and the hunger pangs get worse, it tastes more and more like sponge cake every day. The soup is inedible by any standards except ours, but we wolf it down.

This morning, a couple of us were walking around the courtyard during the half-hour allowed us twice daily for exercise, and caught the smell of roasting meat coming from the kitchen which serves both us and the Germans. We looked in the door like a couple of urchins at the window of a bakery, and were joined by assorted prisoners of all

nationalities. Everyone drooled as the cook carefully brought out several large roasts, basted them, turned them over, and stuck them back in the oven.

No meat turned up for lunch—not that any of us really had expected it. We pointed out to Rudolf that under the Geneva convention—prisoners rapidly become “sea lawyers”—we were entitled to the same food served the German troops in our area. Rudolf said we were getting it, and blamed the whole situation on “your air gangsters.” That was that.

The weather is very cold and wet, and we spend most of the time semifrozen. The wholly inadequate diet makes it all the worse. Lieutenant Harold Zucker, who lives in the Bronx in New York, and who is unofficial funny man in these parts, remarked after lunch today, “I hope nobody tells a dirty story because I might blush, and if I did my feet would freeze.”

We arrived here on a Sunday. The middle of Monday morning we went through our first daylight raid, which fortunately for us was aimed at the center of town, the area around the main railroad station. I happened to be looking out the window when it came.

There was a fairly heavy overcast, and for one reason or another the planes, which we never saw, were on us—and on the antiaircraft defenses—before we knew what was happening. My first warning came when four or five blotchy black streaks, the target indicators, pitched out of the clouds and arched down into the jumbled rooftops of the old town.

Almost simultaneously, it seemed, came the sound of wild gunfire from the antiaircraft batteries down by the river. Then came the familiar who-o-o-osh of the bombs, and we saw them dive from the clouds like a great shoal of minnows and plunge toward the ground along the trail of the smoke indicators. We hit the floor like one man. For the next couple of minutes the building shook and retched in one nauseating spasm after another. Several windows broke over our heads, and the cr-r-r-rumph of the bombs sounded just outside the compound.

When we picked ourselves up as the roar of the planes receded, great fires were already taking hold in the town, a mile or a mile and a half from us, and within an hour huge clouds of smoke were pouring across the city. Some of the fires burned all night. One building only 300 yards from us was hit square by a stray bomb and several people, including two Russian prisoners on work detail outside the camp, were killed.

It was not a very big raid, as raids go nowadays. There may have been a hundred planes involved, but probably no more. It seems, how-

ever, to have done a great deal of damage, and the guards were furious.

Two of them who know I speak German planted themselves a few feet away in the courtyard, the afternoon after the raid, and began a long dialogue spiced with phrases like "beasts in human form," "air gangsters," and "murderers of little children." They recited a long list of horrible incidents in which the "beasts in human form" had picked out orphanages, blind institutes and "kultur monuments" and completely destroyed them with horrible death tolls and uncounted artistic loss to civilization.

There is a well-fostered legend, which with a little imagination any German could disprove by using his eyes, that all American bombers are flown by Negro crews. This is supposed to inflame moral indignation in a people who have been steeped for eleven years in Hitler's race theories, and who look on all Negroes, or for that matter on anyone not white and "aryan," as jungle savages bent on extermination of the white peoples.

It does no good whatever to describe to the average German what you have seen yourself in the blasted hearts of Warsaw or Hull or Coventry or Southampton, to recall the steady months of *blitz* on London or the raids on little market and cathedral towns like Canterbury. These people have been so conditioned by years of propaganda that they automatically believe what they are told, and citizens who four years ago gleefully applauded the *Luftwaffe's* "coventrating" attacks and the "Baedecker raids" on England are now indignant at the preponderance of allied air power and convinced that "terror bombing" is a foul British plot.

We could hear distant artillery last night, and it gave rise to a whole series of rumors, including one of a major American attack which had driven to within thirty miles of Strasbourg. We are still in a complete news vacuum, and leap at a story like that even though we know it is highly improbable.

One of the worst features of this life is that nobody can or will tell you anything, and that you are completely cut off from a world where the destiny of hundreds of millions, including your own miserable little fate, is being fought out.

Strasbourg
SEPTEMBER 28

WE SPENT a total of two hours and a half in the cellar today during three daylight alarms. All of them, apparently, were reconnaissance

flights, because we could hear no bombing, but they caused a complete stoppage of work in all the factories roundabout, and threw the German personnel of the camp into complete confusion. If this is the way Germans react to the approach of allied planes, it must have a crippling effect on war industry.

We have still gotten no action on any of our requests. We can't even get form postcards to send home, which has everyone very blue. We can't even get eating utensils. We have two knives which officers managed to smuggle through the search, and use them in rotation. Otherwise we rely on a handful of spoons, a few bowls, and a lot of odd tin cans. Major Hansen is becoming exceedingly unpopular with the camp authorities, particularly with Rudolf, for continuing to point out, with the greatest of precision, the various shortcomings of the staff. Zucker is even more unpopular with Rudolf, because he throws in a wise-crack at every opportunity. Rudolf never quite catches the cracks, but he thinks his leg is being pulled, and the suspicion worries him for hours.

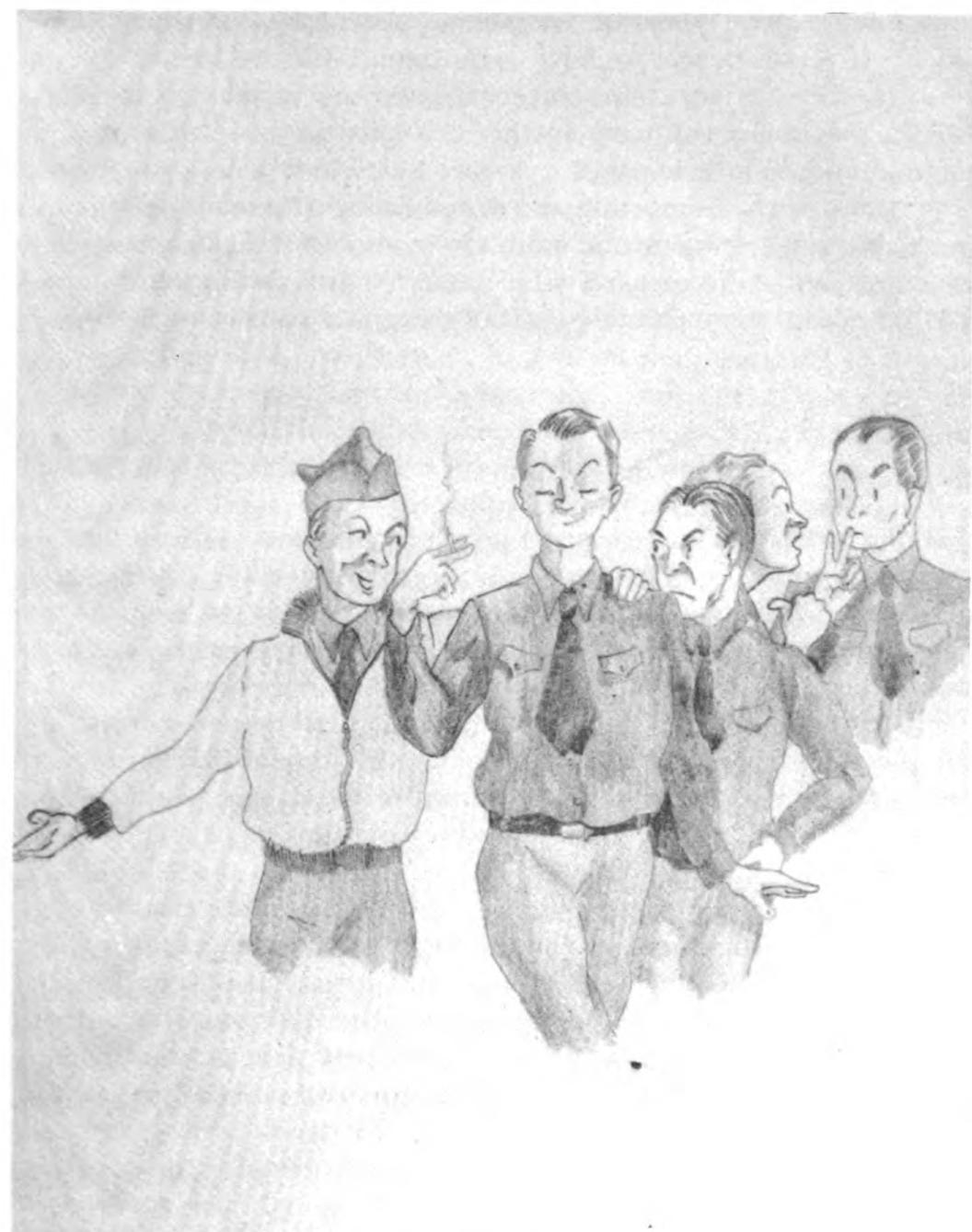
Strasbourg
SEPTEMBER 29

WE WERE only in the shelters twice today, but we had a long night raid last night to keep the average up.

Other prisoners are giving us just enough cigarettes, which Major Hansen pools, to keep us going at a rate of two or three per man per day. Usually, we split each cigarette between two or three men, to spread them out. All butts are saved to be rerolled or stuffed in a pipe. Zucker and I got off to a flying start, because we thought of picking up other people's butts off the floor before the others had become quite that desperate. By now, nobody would dream of throwing a butt away. If anyone shows signs of "sniping" a cigarette—smoking it halfway in order to keep the rest—he is beset by a line of people who want a drag apiece first.

An Italian prisoner who was about to be moved to a new camp presented us with about ten pounds of *ersatz* marmalade stolen from the Germans, because he couldn't carry it with him. We have been using it liberally. I may be wrong, but it already tastes twice as good as it did when we arrived five days ago.

We are also getting news, one way or another. The Italian doctor has a connection outside the camp through which he gets the B.B.C. broadcast news relayed each evening, and he also manages to get a



Strasbourg paper. Whenever we get the paper, I read pertinent stories aloud. It makes us feel we have some contact with reality.

It is quite obvious from the very abbreviated version we get of the B.B.C., that the entire front in this sector is very quiet, and that we should build no false hopes of recapture by a quick American advance. The Germans are trumpeting and drumbeating a "sensational victory" in the making around Arnheim, in Holland, where they say they have an entire British airborne division encircled and facing annihilation. We have heard so much of that sort of thing that none of us believes it.

Strasbourg
SEPTEMBER 30

THREE weeks ago in Paris, most people would have told you that the war would surely be over by today. It seemed inevitable that the great drive across France would maintain enough momentum to crush the Siegfried Line before slowing to a halt, and that even the Germans would then be willing to admit the hopelessness of their case.

It hasn't happened. We have not maintained the momentum, and the probable reason is that gasoline, ammunition and food could not keep pace with the armies. I had known of the danger of that before I was captured, and the Germans were counting on it in their desperation.

If this area is any criterion, the Germans have managed to strengthen their front and to man the Siegfried Line, where three weeks ago they were very short on both men and guns. They have probably done so by using their reserves in training, plus divisions which can be ill-spared from the Russian front. During the dangerous middle of September, they managed to keep a desperate hold on Metz and Belfort and Aachen, and to bring the advance to a standstill.

There is no change in the long-range hopelessness of the situation, and anything except a Nazi regime probably would have made peace long since on any terms. There is no sign of peace sentiment here. The Germans with whom we come in contact are uniformly glum and grim and fatalistic, but they are so obsessed with the danger of "Bolshevism" and so convinced that unconditional surrender would mean the total destruction of Germany, that they are all for fighting on.

Whatever its political advantages, our emphasis of the fact that only unconditional surrender will be accepted probably lengthened the war by months. Goebbels has parlayed it into a vision of abject serfdom for

all Germans, and it strengthens their will "to show them, if necessary, how a great nation dies."

It is quite obvious from our few provincial papers that even Goebbels is having a hard time making the war look like a parade to victory, although he still tries. He is succeeding, however, in making anything look preferable to surrender on the terms the allies have offered.

The fear of Communism is being fed by the story that the Warsaw insurrection was a complete betrayal of Poland. The Germans, who have been systematically starving and pauperizing the Polish nation for five years, now find it convenient to look on the insurgents as a body of patriots who rose at Churchill's instigation only to find that the British could not help them, and that the Russians, who hold the river bank in Praga just across the Vistula from Warsaw, would not. The implication is that the Russians, intending to take over Poland anyway, are only too glad to see Germans engaged in a bloody succession of street battles with the precise elements in Poland which would fight to the death against Soviet domination. That's the picture the German people are being given. No prisoner is in a position to judge what the truth is.

Strasbourg
O C T O B E R 1

IF THERE'S anyone left after five years of war who thinks Sunday automatically means roast beef, he should try the menu in a German prison camp.

Today being Sunday, our first food consisted of *ersatz* coffee at 1:30 P.M., and at 6:30 P.M. we got each a chunk of Tilsit cheese the size of a matchbox. Of course, we had bread from the six-day ration, but there was nothing to put on it except the cheese, and the Tilsit variety is so pungent that about half the crowd balked altogether at it. There was some question, in fact, of asking those who ate their cheese to do so in the open air.

Result was a reconnaissance foray after dark into the prison garden, which is not well wired. The patrol returned with a fair collection of carrots, onions and tomatoes. They taste wonderful.

We have two decks of cards. One of them is composed of odds and ends of three packs. They are of three different sizes, but they are good enough for gin rummy or casino or hearts, and there's a game going most of the day. The other is a full deck belonging to Delalande, and we have gotten in several rubbers of bridge today, which was very rainy.

Somebody discovered an old parcheesee board, made dice from a chunk of wood and counters from an odd cork. There has also been a violent game of "battleships" raging for hours.

The lights, which were out completely for three days after the American air raid, failed again tonight and left us in complete darkness. The gas never has come on since the raid.

Two or three people are suffering from dysentery. Fortunately they do not seem to be serious cases, as we certainly could get nothing from the Germans in way of a cure.

Strasbourg
OCTOBER 2

WHAT with hunger, air raids and the complete indifference of the Germans toward all prisoners, life here is one big pain in the neck.

The sirens blare away several times a day and sometimes twice or three times a night, and everyone must dive for "safety" into what the Germans call their air raid shelters. The officers do not appreciate the social distinction which condemns their more valuable bodies to the old arched cellars where they would certainly be buried under tons of rubble by even a near miss, and invariably sneak out to join the GI's in the open trenches. Usually they are chased back into the darkness.

The only advantage of durance in the cellar is that it's possible to talk to the French and Poles and hear their experiences during four or five years confinement. The Germans plant spies in the cellar to listen in on conversations, but it usually is very easy to keep track of their whereabouts.

A Frenchman told me last night that the treatment of the Russian prisoners varies from downright bad to systematic starvation. He said he personally had seen the arrival in Munich of a box-car in which 100 Russians had been transported all the way from Poland. They had been allowed out at no point en route, and they had been given neither food nor water. When the doors of the car were opened, about sixty were already dead. After a consultation, the Germans decided that the forty live ones were beyond help, and the quick and the dead were thrown into one common grave. It sounds incredible, but there are so many stories of the sort that one inevitably starts to believe them.

Twice we have seen huge columns of Flying Fortresses forging majestically eastward leaving long, white vapor trails behind them. Once we saw three target indicators go down beyond the balloon barrage which guards the vital Kehl bridge. We hoped for a moment they were

signal for an attack on the bridge, because it is probably the route by which the Germans will send us into Germany proper, and if it were destroyed we might be kept here until the day Strasbourg is liberated.

German guards who saw the target indicators claimed that three Fortresses had been shot down. When we laughed at them they were furious. They all have bitter remarks for the *Luftwaffe*. On one occasion here we saw a dozen Messerschmitt 109's over Strasbourg, at a time when there were no allied planes in the vicinity. Three or four times, just at dusk, a Junkers 88 has flown fast and low over the city. It is probably a courier plane. These are the only German planes I have seen since I landed in France this summer, and even in Normandie before the German debacle, I had heard only a few at night.

I have managed to keep my feet in good shape by washing my two pairs of socks alternately. Today, despite the cold, I washed my under-wear. It is still damp tonight, and Lord alone knows how long it will take to dry completely. At least I have a warm combat jacket. Many of the others are in shirtsleeves.

Cold is still not our chief complaint. It is the food. Nobody talks about anything else. Like any group of soldiers chewing the fat, this group of officers occasionally veers toward detailed description of various tight spots its members have been in on one front or the other, but within ten minutes the empty bellies have reasserted themselves and somebody groans for a steak.

The Strasbourg paper gives us a certain amount of enjoyment. It is a miserable little two-page sheet whose space is about equally split between victorious blasts on Arnheim, death notices, and hysterical outbursts against various alleged allied plans for the dismemberment of Germany.

The majority of the death notices are brief family inserts stating that "Our dearly beloved son laid down his life in the east for Fuehrer and Fatherland," or something similar. Current issues, however, go in heavily for deaths in the American air raid, and they are an interesting commentary on the extent to which the various manpower comb-outs have drained away able-bodied males.

Of the thirty-three male notices in yesterday's paper in which death was laid to the air raid, twenty-one gave the age of the victim as above fifty. Two were of boys under fifteen years. The oldest man listed was eighty-nine, and several were above seventy. There have been over 200 air raid death notices so far, and the Germans say there are 300 coffins with unidentified bodies out at the cemetery.

We were given no bread at all today. The excuse was that the man

who should have distributed it had gone off to identify the body of his wife. When Major Hansen suggested that somebody else might take over the job of distribution, he was told that was quite impossible.

The Poles all left the camp late today, and most of the French and Italians as well, which means that we are getting no gift cigarettes. Our ration today amounted to two-thirds of a cigarette per man. That's not much.

Strasbourg
O C T O B E R 3

TODAY is a perfect day, and the air has throbbed most of the time with the sound of big bomber formations. We must have seen several hundred of them coming and going, absolutely without opposition except for a little wild antiaircraft fire. Their targets must have been well beyond the Rhine, because we could not hear the bombs.

We have no tobacco at all except for a few "snipes" saved from more prosperous days, the food is at a new low with the introduction of a soup made from what appears to be eel grass raked out of the Rhine, and everyone is feeling pretty savage.

Our dreariness is heightened by the fact, which smuggled B.B.C. news confirms, that the Germans wiped out the British First Airborne Division at Arnheim. From what we can sift out of the superlatives, if the Arnheim operation had been a success the British would have held open the great Rhine bridge there and their armor would have poured through into flat northern Holland, where it could wheel toward the Ruhr in an area where the West Wall is only half completed. The German papers, of course, play up the victory as a master stroke of strategy, but it hasn't noticeably improved the guards' good humor, and I imagine they know it's only a temporary success.

The papers today say that Churchill, following the Arnheim battle, has been subjected to severe attacks in Commons because he had been too optimistic about an early end of the war. They state that London now has abandoned hopes of a victory before winter, and that General Eisenhower has been forced "desperately" to recast all his offensive plans. It sounds like typical wishful thinking.

The lights failed at 6:30 tonight, and since the Germans insist there are no candles, we all turned in about 7:00 P.M. There is something about prison life which gives one an infinite capacity to sleep. I can do so for twelve hours at a stretch without trouble. When the lights went back on at 9:30, only one other man and myself awoke. We are

now smoking a self-made cigarette, and a pretty skimpy one, between us. When it's finished, we will turn in again.

Strasbourg
O C T O B E R 4

THE train which was to have taken us off to Limburg today failed to materialize, which is perhaps just as well, because we were thus permitted to witness a piece of low comedy which has improved everyone's spirits tremendously.

Last night we completed the stripping of the kitchen garden in a systematic raid which looted it of all tomatoes, carrots and potatoes, plus what onions and lettuce we could lay hands on. Everything was done with extreme care, and the carrot tops and potato plants were stuck back in the ground after the roots had been removed. We eventually got the potatoes cooked with the aid of an electric hot plate stolen from the emergency operating room in the air raid cellar, and consumed everything else raw.

Today a few GI's, who had previously been raiding another garden at the far end of the camp, were caught in the act of expanding their operations to our preserve. The result was a terrible fuss which we all cheered from the second floor windows.

A German captain, a couple of sergeants, and Rudolf appeared in the garden with a file of soldiers. Much searching went on, and then came a strategy meeting abaft the denuded tomato plantation. It broke up when four sentries were posted, bayonets fixed, at various points in the garden. They undoubtedly have orders to shoot on sight. From the few angry words which filtered up to us, the despoiling of the garden classes at least as sabotage.

When six or eight Germans headed for our stairway and began pounding up it in phalanx, we thought we were about to be accused of complicity in this highly regrettable incident. A few stray bits of vegetable top were hurriedly kicked under a cupboard. It turned out to be something infinitely more subversive.

After we had been lined up, and after the inevitable missing man had been found asleep and routed out, the German spokesman commenced.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you are not acting like officers. The sentry below your latrine window reports that a certain American officer has

been standing there making faces at the German girls in the factory across the alley. This insult to German womanhood must cease."

As interpreter for Major Hansen, who was having a hard time keeping a straight face, I told the German that we were at least as indignant as he that such a suggestion should be made of American officers. I said that in fact indignant was a mild term for our feelings. I pointed out that the sill of the window was at least six feet above the floor of the latrine, and that conditions in that chamber were such that nobody in his right mind would waste time there for the questionable thrill of making faces.

"You will proceed singly to the latrine and take up your positions at the window," announced the officer. "The sentry is prepared to make identification of the culprit as he leans out."

With awful solemnity, somewhat ruined by loud wisecracks from the end of the line, we filed into the latrine. There Rudolf had arranged an up-ended slop bucket under the windowsill, so that we could play peek-a-boo with the sentry. As each man leaned from the window, the sentry below peered long and earnestly up into his face, then waved him away. No identification was made, and the Germans retired in shocked dignity with the warning that the incident was by no means closed, and that we would hear more of it later.

A series of discreet reconnaissances into the latrine leads us to the opinion that the girls in the factory, whom nobody had noticed before, are not worth making faces at. The sentry in the alley is pacing up and down, mumbling, presumably about German womanhood.

Strasbourg railway yards
OCTOBER 5

THE Limburg transport, consisting of 250 Americans, twelve British Indians and three French officers, finally marched out of camp at 1:30 P.M. today, guarded by about fifteen Germans in full kit armed with rifles and tommyguns.

We left at least as many Americans behind, including the two GI's with bad leg wounds, about whom nothing has yet been done. All of Major Hansen's efforts to get action out of the camp commandant have been utterly useless, and those of us who are leaving are very grateful indeed to be escaping from the incompetence, indifference and petty thievery of the Strasbourg camp.

During the entire time we have been there, nothing whatever has

been done for us beyond the provision of a starvation diet. We still have no receipts for our valuables, and the last word we got on that was that the valuables would accompany us to Limburg, "where everything will be straightened out."

The route by which we were marched to the freight station apparently had been picked to show us the maximum of civilian damage resulting from the American air raid. It is plenty. We have seen scores of buildings battered flat, and hundreds without windows or roofs. Several big warehouses are completely burned-out, and the city transport system is hardly functioning. At that, we have by no means seen all the damage caused by the raid.

The bombers apparently did not hit the railway station, but several bombs landed just outside, and these seem to have caused a large proportion of the casualties.

In the freight station we were herded into boxcars and given a bale of straw per car to soften the floor a bit. The GI's are packed forty to a car, in the best *quarante hommes, huit chevaux* tradition of the last war. The nineteen officers share a car with the twelve British Indians. Everyone is amused by this little petty tyranny. The Germans, race conscious as they are, presumably think we will object to riding with brown men. In matter of fact, everyone agrees the Indians are good fellows and good soldiers.

While the Germans were nailing barbed wire over the two narrow openings high in the sides of the car, and bolting the door tight shut, we tried the sleeping arrangements. Since there are only thirty-one of us, we shall be able to sleep with a minimum of lengthwise crowding and a maximum of crosswise. We ought to keep fairly warm that way, but if anyone wants to turn over during the night, about seven other people will be forced to turn with him.

The Indians say normal prisoner of war travel is sixty men to a box-car, and that it's impossible to sleep except in relays, thirty men sitting or lying while the other thirty stand jammed in one end of the car.

As the door was bolted shut, everyone thought of the danger of strafing planes. It's quite obvious that if we are attacked en route, the Germans will head for the fields and leave us to be riddled, but we had no luck in protesting at the locking of the doors. Somebody nicknamed the train "The Twentieth Century Nightmare," and somebody else "The Strafees' Express." We are trying to take steps to see that at least one door can be opened in an emergency.

Just before the last door was bolted, I got into a brief conversation

with the little German who had censored and returned this notebook. A possible explanation for its return came out of the talk.

"You know," he said, "we German soldiers all fear that we will be sent off to Siberia if you win the war."

I said I thought high Nazis had every reason to be worried, but not the common man who had fought for his country as a patriotic duty.

"Go ahead and send them," he said. "They brought all this on."

"There will be a lot of SS and *Gestapo* who will need punishment too," I said.

"Absolutely," he replied. "I know them. You see, I once spent a year as their guest in Columbia House."

Columbia House was a headquarters and prison near Tempelhof airdrome in Berlin where the *Gestapo* did some of its more expert torturing of political prisoners in the years before the war.

It is now nearly 8:00 P.M., and the train has shunted back and forth from time to time in the yards, but we are not more than a mile from our starting point. We have eaten part of the two-slice piece of bread and the tablespoon of jam we were given as "travel ration" for what we are assured will be a short trip. We are about to turn in. It's going to be a terrible night.

A Siding near Frankfurt am Main
O C T O B E R 6

IT WAS a terrible night.

Zucker and I shared my blanket, for what it was worth. I had drawn a corner, which at first sight looked like a break. Unfortunately a rat, or perhaps a desperate prisoner, had chewed a sizeable hole through to the outside of the car, and the wind blew relentlessly into my ear no matter which way I lay. I finally managed to get the hole more or less stuffed with straw.

Zucker, who weighs around 160 pounds, lay between Coles and myself, both in the neighborhood of 200—in my case a little too far from 200, unfortunately. He spent most of the night bracing himself to avoid the suffocation which threatened him. Neither of us ever got much of the blanket, but I suppose it helped our morale.

Several times during the night my feet and legs got snarled with those of the man sleeping foot-to-foot with me. Once we woke each other and also came close to mayhem on the persons of several nearby sleepers by lashing out simultaneously with our feet in a sleepy impression that we were tied in a tangle of ropes.

Sanitary arrangements being nonexistent, a tin can had been hung by one of the three foot by one openings. It could be emptied through the barbed wire nailed across the aperture—with luck. Unfortunately, anyone who wanted to use the can had to stumble across a dozen or so pairs of legs before reaching the indicated position. This awakened the entire end of the car except for one Frenchman who lay solidly on his back the entire night and snored under a fine head of steam, much to the disgust of the wakeful.

I suppose we were semi-conscious most of the time. It seemed to us that the train had moved miles in various directions, and that between moves had come long halts in which the panting of an engine could be heard. Unfortunately, when we were able to distinguish things outside along about 7:00 A.M. today, we discovered that the moves had just about cancelled themselves out, and that net progress on the route we assume leads to Limburg probably did not exceed 100 yards.

This morning we have no water, virtually no food, and no chance to leave the car. When Major Hansen shouted through the wire at the *Feldwebel* commanding the guard, he was told it would be impossible to let us out because we were starting any moment. It has been the same at each halt since, except for twice when the prisoners were permitted to get out, a car at a time.

Once we got five minutes apiece before being herded back into the cars. The second time our car, the first, got about a minute, at which point the engineer decided to start up again, thus catching about ten men with their pants down and causing no end of amusement to the German guards, whose humor generally speaking is about on that level.

The day being very dark and thus unfavorable for air attack, we finally got underway from Strasbourg about 8:00 A.M. If it had been bright, we probably should have spent another twenty-four hours in those yards. The train by this time included fifteen or twenty cars loaded with war equipment, and the locomotive managed to progress with us at a rate of around twenty miles an hour only by virtue of a long halt every half hour during which it panted miserably and gathered courage to stumble forward again. During all the interminable halts we have remained inside on our dirty straw, talking, trying to read the two books we have with us, or playing cards in the dim light. There is always a group clustered at the air openings, peering out the barbed wire. Nobody says much—they just look.

Hitler became obsessed with his *Autobahnen*, his great express highways, back in 1934, and since then the railways have taken a very back



seat to them and to the demands of the arms industry on all available steel and production machinery. The result was that the State Railways, as early as 1938, were running on outworn equipment and operating hours late even on important schedules. The effects of the war have obviously been catastrophic, and even the loot of the railways of Europe plus the belated replacement program of the last two years have been hopelessly inadequate to keep up with the wastage.

Now allied air attack has reached out into Germany proper to repeat the paralysing blow it struck at the railways of France before the invasion. At various points this morning we have passed other locomotives even more unfortunate than the wretched specimen which started us off from Strasbourg. They are 100 per cent casualties to American and British fighter planes, either blown up and toppled over on their sides or riddled by hundreds of air cannon shells and almost beyond hope of repair.

Twice we passed the wreckage of an ammunition train which had been squarely hit and which had blown up, scattering shell cases, fragments, and shreds of freightcar over a square mile or so of the peaceful Rhineland countryside. We saw two airfields whose hangars had been demolished, and which showed no signs of life although, in such proximity to the front, they would be invaluable fighter bases if the *Luftwaffe* were in position to use them.

North of Haguenau, which once was an important French garrison covering the northeast corner of Alsace, we crossed into Germany proper. The old frontier signs are now down, of course, but the border is clearly marked by the line of the West Wall—great, squat pillboxes and other massive works camouflaged in green paint which melts them into the hillsides, thousands of small bunkers and open gunpits, all interlaced with new-dug trenches and anti-tank ditches. The line is obviously ready for defense, but as far as we could see, unmanned and ungunned.

It has always been understood that the West Wall mounted few permanent guns, and was intended to receive in its prepared positions the field guns and heavy artillery of the armies which might be thrown into it for defense. That seems to be about right. Hitler and Goering conceived of an air arm which would largely usurp the function of artillery, and although the Germans have fine guns, they have never had them in the mass we possess and fear our artillery more than any other allied weapon. Now air power has failed them as well.

Once on a siding we saw a half dozen mammoth railway guns, probably taken from the French, standing deserted on their massive car-

riages. They are of little use in the sort of warfare now going on up in the hills, but would be valuable once the West Wall itself came into the fighting zone.

The Germans obviously are pushing agriculture to the limit in this fruitful plain, one of the most productive areas in Germany. All the fields are tilled, and the crops have been good. The land looks very prosperous and peaceful, except for the French and German bunkers and the few spots where war has struck. The only thing out of the ordinary is the workers in the fields. All are women or children. Sometimes you see twenty or thirty women working a single field. Many of them certainly have been recruited from city populations and many must be foreign slave workers. The only men we saw in numbers were working aimlessly around a few score miniature oil wells, many of them dead, which we passed in mid-morning. Total production of this "Oilfield" can't be more than a hundred barrels a day, but Germany needs every drop she can get, natural or synthetic, since the United States Strategic Air Force began concentrating on refineries, coal reduction plants, and storage areas.

The cities are a dismal contrast to the rich farm countryside. We passed through the edges of Ludwigshafen, the great chemical center, and saw dozens of big factories and hundreds of workers' apartment buildings blasted or gutted. Off in the distance were other concentrations of factory chimneys. Many of them were smoking, but at least as many were not. We unfortunately were denied a chance to see the damage in Mannheim, a great industrial city just across the Rhine from Ludwigshafen. It would have given us a lot of pleasure.

Once, when we were completely parched with the dusty heat, the train stopped alongside a vineyard. It was in the *Rheinpfalz*, the Palatinate area where the grapes grow sweeter than anywhere else in Germany. Women, children, and one or two old men were harvesting the grapes, piling them in fat yellow bunches into big baskets which they carried on their backs to the waiting waggons.

A small boy, not recognizing us as pariahs, passed two bunches—it worked out at six grapes per man—through the barbed wire of our car before a guard shooed him away. Thereafter we watched the vineyard workers give the guards grapes by the helmetful and armful. The guards stuffed them by the score into their mouths while the cool juice dribbled out the corners, and they made a point of doing it in full view of the prisoners. Every so often a guard would turn and grin at us.

We crossed the Rhine at Worms, and a gloomy moment it was. Most of the trainload saw for the first time what a broad, strong river

it is, and the chances of escape or rescue suddenly seemed very remote.

Our first locomotive expired before we crossed the river, and a second was finally located. It broke down at a small station about twenty miles south of Frankfurt am Main, where we now wait for a third. Our food for the day has been four thin slices of bread with a little margarine, and our only liquid one filling of a water bucket and a few odd bottles. When we stopped here, the guards permitted each car to filch a couple of big raw turnips of some sort out of an adjoining field. They taste like wood, but they are cool and faintly sweet. There is no food left to carry us on into Limburg, and it's quite obvious that this lot of guards will make no effort to get any for us.

In the Lahn Valley
O C T O B E R 7

IN A half hour or so we should reach Limburg, which apparently is to be our permanent camp. Everyone is strangely excited in the hope that things will be a little better organized, and because we should finally get Red Cross parcels. Those parcels bulk very large in conversation, and each hungry mile makes them look better.

Only those who saved a scrap of bread from yesterday have had anything to eat today, and since it is past noon we undoubtedly have nothing in prospect until evening. The Indians miraculously conjured a few more cigarettes out of their haversacks this morning, which has been some consolation, but all morning we have been passing through the most famous stretch of vineyards on the Rhine, and even tobacco can't distract one for long from the tantalizing, grape-laden vines.

Great wines like *Schloss Johannisberger* come from this area, and the names of the neat little stations through which we passed read like a connoisseur's wine list.

We acquired a locomotive at some point in another interminable cramped night during which I slept better only from exhaustion. This morning at first light we were back on the left bank of the river, in the heavily damaged freight yard at Mainz. This city suffered one of the most devastating of all R.A.F. saturation raids and has been attacked on other occasions, and although we left too early for details to be visible, we could make out the gaunt bones of block after gutted block as the engine groaned out on the last lap.

We recrossed the Rhine and near Wiesbaden, passed alongside the tremendous Opel automobile works, a General Motors plant usurped

for German military production. Here great blocks of masonry and heavy girders and machine tools had been hurled around like chaff by the cataclysm of allied airpower. The plant seemed very badly damaged and as far as we could make out even the Germans, who accomplish wonders of reconstruction, had been discouraged at the job of reviving it.

We hoped we were about to see Frankfurt, which a guard said was the most awful of all blasted cities, but the train swung northward to inch down the Rhine's right bank. There was almost no damage along the river, except for a few sunken steamers and an occasional string of barges sent to the bottom and now lying awash, still in line astern behind the wreck of their side-wheeler tug.

There is considerable river traffic along the Rhine, and the Germans are obviously determined to keep the river open by turning the steep-walled valley into an inferno of antiaircraft fire. Eighty-eight millimeter guns are emplaced in the vineyards below the crumbling legendary castles. We thought we could distinguish a battery on top of the Lorelei cliff. On almost every station siding there are *flak* cars, converted flatcars which carry either one eighty-eight or eight twenty millimeter guns in two quadruple mounts, plus a little cabin where the crew lives between raids.

Almost every train which passed us this morning, and everything on wheels did pass us, had one or two *flak* cars hitched to the end. We saw cars from France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Italy, Poland and the Balkans. They were loaded with shot-up tanks, broken-down transport and an occasional string of new field kitchens, artillery pieces or gun caissons. Several trains obviously were evacuating factory machinery from threatened areas of the Rhineland. Others had full cargoes of Ruhr coal or big baulks of timber which would go into field fortifications.

Our train, which was primarily devoted to humans, and prisoners at that, had too low a priority to rate any *flak* car protection, and it certainly never got precedence on the right of way. It was a mercy that no allied plane spotted us and attacked us, because it would have been sheer slaughter.

As we turned off the Rhine at Niederlahnstein, on the east bank just upriver from Koblenz, we would hear sirens blowing in the city, and thought we could hear a formation of heavy bombers approaching. There is an important bridge across the river between Koblenz and Ehrenbreitstein, which was headquarters of the American Army of Occupation after the last war, and as we craned back for a glimpse we

could see the balloons of the defensive barrage at the bridge rise above the vine-covered hills.

The little Lahn river runs through one of the lushest valleys in Germany, and its lower stretches are untouched by war. Later, when we have crossed the Rhine, it may become a battlefield: there are not many exits from the steep Rhine valley, and the Germans will defend all of them bitterly. Today it looks just as it did fifteen years ago when I saw it for the first time from a Packard sedan, a perfect holiday resort where *Meinherr* can drink cold beer in the tree-shaded gardens and his wife can recuperate on coffee and cheese cake from the rigors of a stroll along the paths through the manicured woodlands.

The only people on holiday in evidence today were a handful of legless or armless German officers lounging on the terrace of a hotel in Bad Ems. Two or three who still had their limbs were fishing for trout in the river, and the sight of them started a nostalgic discussion of fishing trips back home.

We are pulling into the Limburg railway yards as I finish this entry, and everyone is delighted to discover them two-thirds immobilized by a recent air attack, with at least twenty locomotives either ripped by air cannon fire or grotesquely overturned by bombs.

Diez Castle, in the Lahn Valley
O C T O B E R 1 0

SINCE the last entry in this diary, three days ago, I have discovered what "living conditions" can really be like in a German prisoner-of-war camp and have gone through solitary confinement and found it, by extraordinary good luck, infinitely preferable to the normal camp.

That the solitary confinement lacked all the terrors which imagination has built up about Nazi interrogation centers, and that I now have my diary back after its second confiscation, is largely due to the decency of the officer assigned to question me. It is due for the rest to a remarkable pair of coincidences.

To take events chronologically: We arrived at the camp in Limburg, travel-worn and famished, in the early afternoon. After an hour's wait in an outer compound, during which the German guards disappeared into the air raid shelters at a sudden blare from the sirens, but left us aboveground, we were searched again. Almost everything the Germans at Strasbourg had neglected to remove from us was taken here, except for clothing and strictly personal possessions like toilet

articles. Included in the confiscated articles were all helmets or helmet liners, which left me just about the only member of the group with any head covering at all. It was here that I lost the diary.

Everyone but the Germans got an immense kick out of one incident. A German officer who strolled over to inspect the growing pile of confiscated articles, suddenly straightened and came charging toward us roaring like a bull. Clutched in his hand was a sheaf of papers covered with the cross-hatched "oceans" you draw for the game of "Battleships." By the time a game is finished, the "oceans" are covered with all sorts of cabalistic marks, and the officer obviously thought he had unearthed something pretty darned important in the espionage line.

He demanded to whom they had belonged, peering around the circle of officers' faces in an effort to find someone sinister. The nineteen of us all had recognized what he had, and about all the German saw was grins. This infuriated him all the more and he began storming. Finally Major Hansen offered to produce the culprit if the German would accept the true nature of the "documents." The game was explained to him. Lieutenant Thompson, trying his best to keep a straight face, came forward and admitted he had preserved the papers for toilet use, since the Germans had supplied nothing better. The officer stalked off looking sheepish.

Officers and men were separated at the delousing center, where we spent the usual five minutes under a blistering shower and the usual two hours shivering after it. A Russian who worked in the shower room gave us some home-grown and home-cured German tobacco of the type we had seen en route, and it almost blew our heads off. Finally we were herded off to the officers' compound.

Limburg camp is a huge complex of one-storyed wooden and brick barracks and tents, divided into a series of compounds by seven-foot barbed wire fences which keep prisoners from fraternizing. Between any prisoner and the outside world there are not only the ordinary fences but several double barbed wire barricades forming the outer perimeter. Big watch towers equipped with searchlights and machine guns guard the outer wire. The officers' compound holds two barracks and an odoriferous latrine, and contains a stretch of sloping mud where "exercise" is permitted during daylight hours, if there is no air raid. During an air raid prisoners are confined to the flimsy barracks.

The camp contains thousands of Russian, Polish, French and Indian prisoners who are permanently installed and most of whom work outside the camp in small groups known as "labor commandos." As far as we are concerned, it is not a permanent camp. We are part of the

transient population, composed of men taken prisoner in the west, which funnels through here on the endless trek to permanent camps farther east. According to the story current here, American officers and de Gaulist French, whom the Germans segregate from the prisoners of 1940 because they might "pervert" them, face a journey of four days and nights in box-cars before they finally reach an officers' camp in western Poland.

The transients at the moment are almost entirely American and British, including hundreds of men from the ill-fated British First Airborne Division from Arnhem. These latter are uniformly fed-up at what they consider was a botched job, but they hoot at the trumpetings of the German propagandists that the victory was a supreme result of Nazi cleverness. They say a German corps, including crack armored units, happened by chance to be hurrying south to check the British land advance into Holland, and that it was in position to attack the lightly-armed parachutists and glider infantry before they could properly organize. At that, the division took a terrible toll in Nazi dead, held out twice as long as had been planned, and almost preserved the Rhine bridge for the advancing British tanks. These men have the air of soldiers who know they have fought well.

The Germans left us at the door of the main officers' barrack, and we crowded through into a low-ceilinged room about 100 feet by fifty. Here 157 American and British officers have been existing under conditions of squalor and confusion which it is almost impossible to describe. The barrack is not crowded at the moment, by German standards: nearly 100 officers left a few days ago in one of the periodic prisoner shipments from Limburg to the permanent officers' camps.

The officers at Limburg live a sort of honeycomb existence in two great blocks of three-tiered wooden bunks which cover the entire floor space except for a congested center aisle. The only bunks not three-tiered, and not jammed close to one another, are the handful which constitute the sick bay where a captured American doctor and a couple of medical assistants treat serious wound cases for which the Germans provide no hospital care.

The bunks have no springs, just a few boards laid in the bottoms. There is supposed to be a straw mattress for each bunk, but at least half the occupants sleep on the boards. Three blankets are allotted each man. The bed boards make excellent fuel for a couple of dozen little tin-can stoves on which the prisoners cook what Red Cross food they have. The "kriegies"—a kriegie is a prisoner in P.O.W. slang—to whom food and warmth are the two essentials, consequently shave them

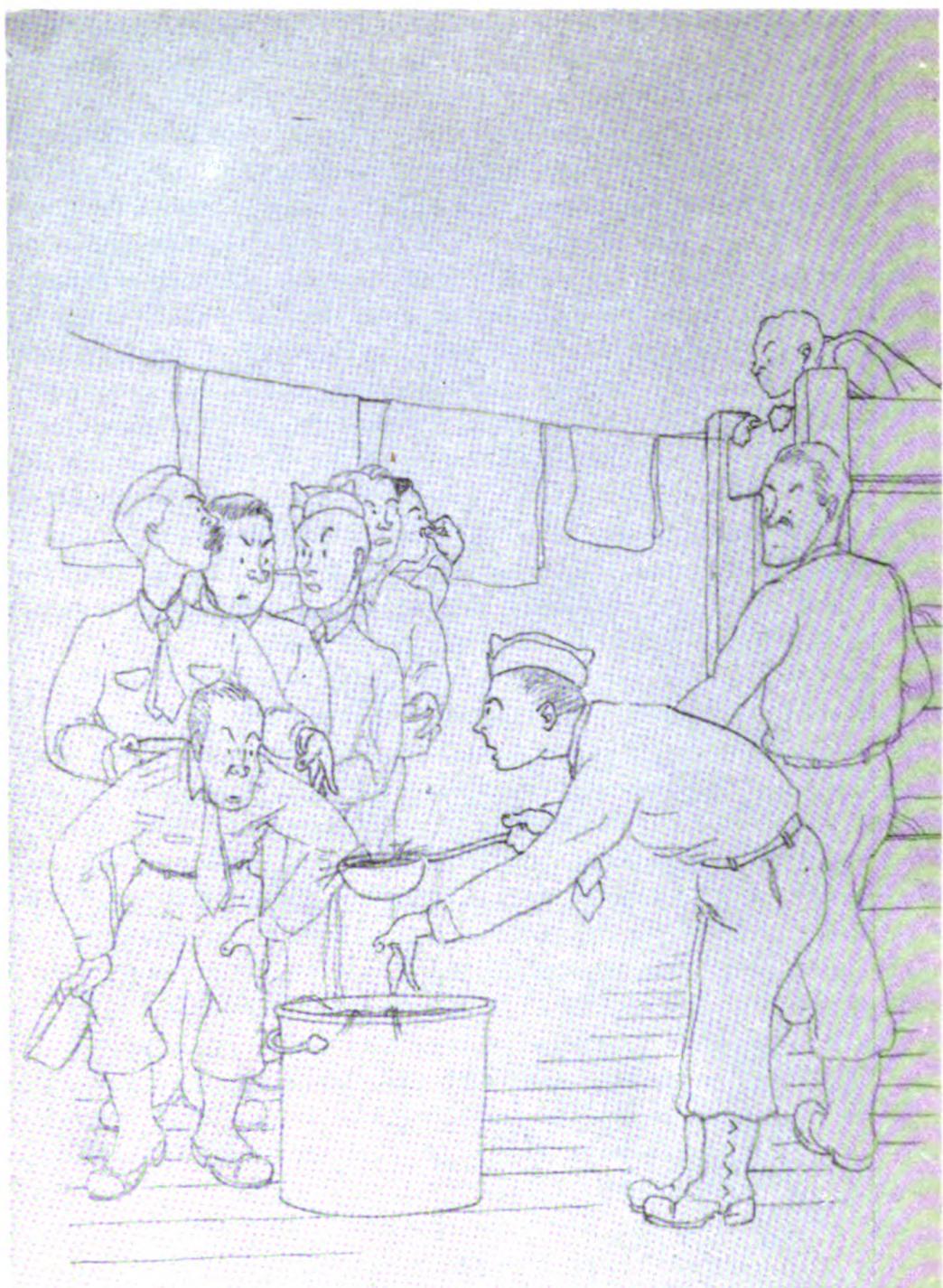


into small bits, infuriating the Germans. The Germans regard burning of bed-boards as sabotage against the Third Reich, and constantly threaten dire punishment.

Except during the night, when the majority tosses on the hard bunks and shivers in the damp, foggy cold, and only the minority stumbles back and forth to the black hole of the latrine to relieve its dysentery, the barracks is a mad-house. All day long, everyone crawls all over everyone else, down the central aisle, through the narrow passages between bunks, and around the half-dozen tables which do duty for the entire crowd. The floor is always damp, and sometimes wet with rain-water tracked in from outside. Dank festoons of laundry hang everywhere on a maze of lengths of string. The laundry never becomes quite dry. Eventually it becomes smoke-cured in the clouds from three big tiled stoves. There is no coal for the stoves, because the Germans do not consider coal necessary for war prisoners, regardless of the temperature, before November 1; but the prisoners kindle minute wood and paper fires in them to cook their sketchy meals, and there is always a line waiting for the next chance to heat some food.

The food handed out by the German kitchen at Limburg is terrible, even by the prison camp standards which we have come to accept. Like the sleeping conditions, it would nauseate the clientele of a dime-a-night Bowery flophouse. The staples are a soup made from eel grass or something which bears an awful resemblance to it, a thick, sweetish mess made from sugar beets, a bitter concoction of rutabagas, and "purple passion," a lurid article composed of water and red cabbage. These products, which are perpetrated at noon in rotation, are all completely unseasoned, and it is a toss-up which is the worst. Arguments on this subject are long and heated. The remainder of the daily ration consists of 200 grams of bread and minute quantities of jam and margarine. About three times a week, each man gets a few boiled potatoes, and on Sundays there is a two-inch length of sausage made from raw beef. A man willing to take the trouble can mix it with bread crumbs to make two quarter-size hamburgers.

If it weren't for the Red Cross packages, conditions at Limburg would be intolerable. The Germans claim the supply of them is short, and that "your bombing" makes a new shipment problematical, with the result that instead of a full parcel each prisoner gets one-third of a parcel each week. That one-third goes a long way, particularly in morale-boosting, but the six weeks or more which many prisoners spend "in transit" at Limburg must badly weaken their systems, and the extra food is not enough.



"Well, I didn't cook it, did I?"

Colonel Paul ("Pop") Good, U.S.A., senior among the British and American officers at Limburg and therefore their spokesman to the Germans, is faced with the problem of bettering conditions, a job calculated to send any man out of his wits. Good is a professional soldier with a deep-seated idea of the dignity an officer's commission should carry with it, and he rages at the futility of trying to get the Germans to provide halfway decent facilities for his officers. His heavy eyebrows draw down in anger when he talks of the hopelessness of making sense out of the camp commandant, a certain Colonel von Reckord, who apparently does not care what happens to the prisoners and who obviously ignores the provisions of the Geneva convention.

Conditions at Limburg are so bad that the camp is notorious even among the Germans. As a result, the German Foreign Office was forced to take cognizance of them a few days ago, and a certain Herr Reinhart, who was sent to inspect the camp, admitted that steps must be taken to improve it. Nobody is very optimistic. Meanwhile Good has obtained a few concessions for the officers, but is completely helpless to improve the position of the enlisted men. The Germans say enlisted men come under an entirely different organization, and must speak for themselves.

As a consequence, they forbid any officer to visit the enlisted men's section. This includes the doctor and a captured army chaplain. It is known, however, that the men are sleeping 400 to a side-show sized tent, with one blanket apiece and nothing between them and the bare, damp ground.

(Conditions never did improve at Limburg. On the contrary, they became infinitely worse as the German debacle grew. Many of the photographs of living skeletons which had been American soldiers were taken at this camp.)

Conversation is the chief recreation at Limburg, and there are a thousand short stories in that barrack room alone. Colonel Good's own experience makes our trip from Strasbourg sound like a holiday excursion. He was captured in France just after D-day, and spent twenty-three days in a packed box-car en route to Limburg. At one time, he and other senior officers were led out into a field to be shot because fifteen occupants of his car had escaped through a hole hacked in the side. Good, who would have been sixteenth to go out the hole, succeeded in talking the Germans out of the group execution. Other officers have been strafed by allied fighters while locked in, sixty to a car. Still others tell of Germans who fired indiscriminately into a truck-load of prisoners when one captive jumped off and escaped. Five pris-

oners were killed. Others tell of wounded who were given no care for forty-eight hours, then thrown into freight trains for trips which lasted days on end and were enough to exhaust a man in full health.

There is other conversation as well, and it's almost invariably about food. Home and Mother, or the girl around the corner, come in a bad second. There are a few decks of cards, and a couple of cribbage games are going the entire time, stopping only for the morning and evening roll calls on the "promenade" outside the barrack. Colonel Good staked me to four cigarettes in a poker game with a three-chip limit at one-twentieth of a cigarette per chip. I won two cigarettes and felt like Croesus. A few of the real hellions shoot craps for as much as five or ten cigarettes at a time. They are men who have found their feet in the trading game and established a working capital.

Cigarettes are the basis for all trading, either with other prisoners for Red Cross items, or with the guards for rations stolen from the commissary. Trading with prisoners is a shooting offense if a guard is caught at it, but the guards are so corrupt that they take the chance. They get only sixty cigarettes a month as base troops, and a cigarette is reputedly worth two marks, or eighty cents at pre-war rates, in the black market outside the camp.

In trading with the guards, a loaf of army bread is worth twenty cigarettes; a German gas mask container of potatoes, say two pounds, brings ten; a half container of onions is ten cigarettes or a small cake of soap; fifty gummed or 100 ungummed cigarette papers cost three; a razor blade is one; a pair of socks is twenty; a box of matches is three. Transactions are conducted in the barrack vestibule after dark, or in the deep shadows by the latrine.

Men of two nations and of every layer of society live together amazingly well in the ant-heap of a barrack at Limburg. They form eating groups of five men which work on a share-and-share basis, they help keep the place as clean as the natural filth and damp will permit. They are united in face of the Germans, and with one exception, they respect the private property, such as it is, which each man has tried to collect. A reasonably clean tin can or a length of string or a box has a tremendous value to a prisoner, and if the inmates of the officers' barrack ever discover the man who stole a watch and a Red Cross parcel three days ago, he will be dealt with in summary fashion without recourse to the German disciplinary machine.

I spent less than forty-eight hours at Limburg, and saw only enough of the place to convince me that it was a disgrace to the German army. I was not there long enough to get my one-third Red Cross parcel, and



Black Market—Limburg

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stood around at cooking time with the others from Strasbourg like so many Little Match Girls. The "old" prisoners at Limburg had a communal fund of cigarettes to which each man contributed, so that newcomers could at least have a ration of two cigarettes, but it was hopeless to try to give them food on that sort of basis. No one had enough.

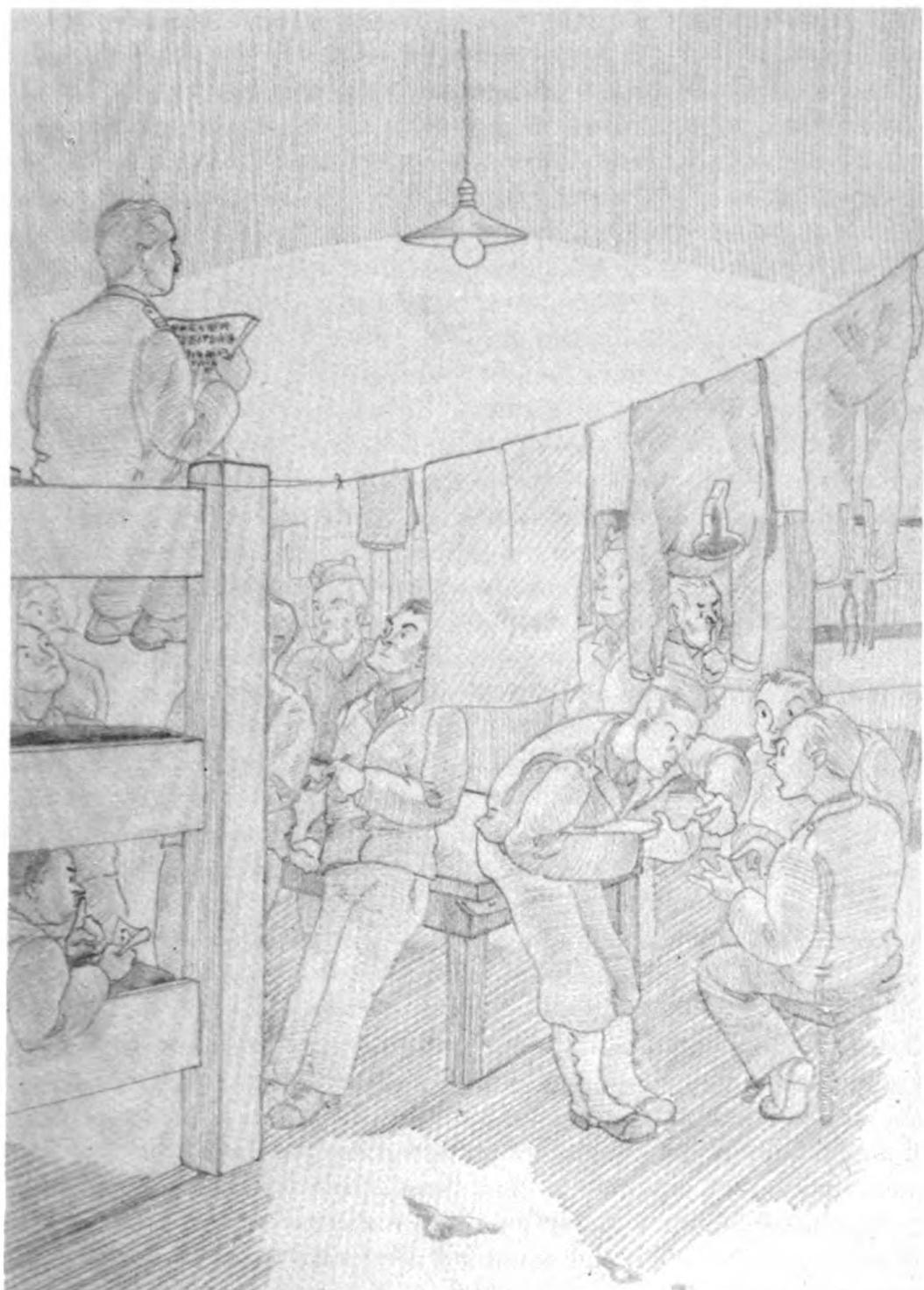
Two functions stood out in my mind. The first was a variety program staged by the British for the benefit of the Americans. It was held on a stage of mess tables, with a couple of blankets as curtain and no properties but a few stools. Some of the sketches, which ran strongly to the foibles of top sergeants and the manners of the old-line army, would have been funny by anyone's standards.

The second was the nightly intelligence talk. This consisted of a reading of the German communique, which by that time had been smuggled into camp, plus a summary of various rumors and reports picked up by prisoners of one nationality or another and passed on by the camp grapevine. In each case, the intelligence officer tried to label the report as plausible, improbable, or highly questionable. It was a very difficult job. Rumors hatch like flies in any army, and they are always particularly bad when soldiers are confined, as they are in an Atlantic convoy or a prison camp. The intelligence talk always started off with a good audience despite the card games and the cooking queues. By the time it was half over, at least a dozen small groups would have started stage whisper arguments on high strategy, and debate became general once the intelligence man finally jumped down from his top bunk.

While I was Limburg, we got word that 28,000 cigarettes had been sent from a nearby air force prisoners' camp, to be distributed among us. They had arrived several days before. The Germans denied all knowledge of them, and it was fairly clear who had benefited.

For the newcomers, there was one thing which compensated for a lot. We were finally permitted to send off postcards to our families stating the bare fact that we were alive and unwounded, and promising more details once we reached a permanent camp.

Major Hansen and I, with thirteen other officers and enlisted men, six of whom were British, were haled out of camp after morning roll call on the ninth, and marched off. Colonel Good got me off to one side just before we left, gave me three or four cigarettes, and told me that from everything he knew, we were going to Diez castle, where we would be held in solitary confinement and given a thorough interrogation. He said that to the best of his knowledge there would be no rough stuff.



Communiqué Time, or Grand Strategy to the Fore: "Now, gentlemen, it is clear despite the intentional vagueness of the German communique that General Eisenhower's main idea is . . ."

"These are the front men," he said, "and I think you'll be pretty well treated."

My own past residence in Germany has made me so jittery at the prospect of segregation from the normal run of prisoners that anything of this sort sets my nerves on edge. I asked Good, once the war ended and he had been liberated, to check on my whereabouts and if necessary, to fill in the United Press on where I had last been seen. I told him I intended to keep demanding that I be sent to an officers' camp, but that I expected sooner or later to be taken to Berlin and was very uncertain what would happen to me there.

We marched to Diez in column of threes along a road which wound through the hills. We were about as threadbare a bunch as I had ever seen. Nobody had a complete uniform and most of us at Limburg had been given French garrison caps, which come to a high point front and rear and which in almost every case were a size too small. The Limburg authorities seemed to make it a point never to issue to any man the uniform items which were prescribed by his own army. There were plenty of Poles at Limburg wearing American field jackets, but no Americans ever got them. Americans usually were issued with French overcoats of a type which came from the days of the Commune, or seemed to. The overcoats, incidentally, were taken back before prisoners embarked on the box-car trip to Poland, on which everyone invariably almost froze to death.

It is only about two miles to Diez, and our relief at leaving Limburg was so great that gradually we began humming, then whistling, in time to the march. We finally settled on "The Fuehrer's Face," with low-pitched accompanying sound effects, and got a great kick out of the knowledge that the Germans didn't know the words that went with the tune.

Diez castle is the typical storybook Rhineland *Burg* which juts up in a confusion of angled graystone walls, battlements and steep roofs from the cluster of old houses at its base. Even today, the massive keep looks capable of protecting the town from marauding robber bands, but the picturebook stuff went out of date generations ago, and the keep for many years has been used as a prison.

For a while the *Gestapo* took over the castle, which had once belonged to the Dukes of Orange Nassau, Royal House of the Netherlands, and used the dozens of little cells high in the keep for its own secret purposes. It fitted the little ten by six-foot rooms with blank steel doors which contain only one small peephole apiece, and it barred every window through which there was even the faintest chance of

escape. Most of the windows are still unbarred, because escape is almost unthinkable. There is anything up to 150 feet of sheer drop under each window, and there are no hand or footholds on the wall.

Sometime during the war, the army took over the castle as a center at which prisoners from the western front could be worked over for what information they might have. The army, which prides itself on being *korrekt* in all things, fought clear of the third degree, the water treatment, the electric needle and similar *Gestapo* refinements. It relied on the forbidding appearance of the castle and the boredom and uncertainty of solitary confinement to make its prisoners talkative. Inscriptions on the cell walls showed that many men had been left alone for up to four weeks. If the interrogating officer so ordered, they were left without books, cigarettes and heat, and they could be put on bread and water. Some were interrogated dozens of times, often being yanked out in the dead of night when they might be sleep-drugged and off their guard.

Otherwise, the arrangements were infinitely better at Diez than at any other point we had struck. My cell, number twenty-eight, had a stool, a chamber pot, a wooden bunk with straw tick and two blankets. It was perfectly clean, and there was plenty of light. Scratched on the pale yellow walls were dozens of inscriptions. Some of the older ones, dating back more than five years, showed that past prisoners had been kept in solitary for many weeks at a time. The newer ones usually covered ten days or so. There were two or three poems in French scratched with a pin or a knife blade into the plaster, but I didn't get around to deciphering them at the start, and once I left the cell I never came back. I remember one Frenchman had defiantly scrawled "Vive de Gaulle" in two-inch capitals across the top of the door.

I hadn't been at Diez ten minutes when the first coincidence occurred. The cell door was still open and I was making my bed and wondering how much personal interest the Nazis had in me, when I heard somebody say "hallo" in a loud whisper behind my back.

I turned and stared into a wide grin belonging to Lieutenant Henri de Vilmorin of General de Gaulle's staff, probably the last man on earth I would have imagined at Diez. Henri and I had met first in Addis Ababa in 1935, when the Fascist grand grab was about to claim its first victim, and when the job of war correspondent was more like a picnic or a camping trip than a nerve-wracking item in a grim world conflict. Henri then was correspondent for a Paris paper. I had seen him since in the Balkans in 1940, when the democracies were trying one way or another to halt the steady perversion of the helpless little

nations; in a big London hotel in 1942, when the forces were gathering for the invasion of North Africa; and finally in 1943 in Algiers, at the end of the Tunisian campaign.

Before I could ask Henri how he had been captured, a guard hustled him along the corridor, and my own door was slammed and locked. Within ten minutes, however, it reopened, and a guard handed me a whole package of American cigarettes and twelve matches. It made me feel like a millionaire and I smoked two immediately, just to see what it felt like.

Two hours later the guard came again to conduct me downstairs for questioning. In a small office furnished with a desk, two chairs and an iron bedstead sat the interrogating officer, a pleasant faced, youngish man with the rank insignia of a *Sonderfuehrer*. There is no equivalent of this rank in the allied armies. Its holder is treated as an officer but in fact is only attached to the army for special duties, usually those of interpreter or intelligence expert.

Right at the start, this interview produced the second coincidence. The *Sonderfuehrer* took down my full name, rank and serial number, then said, "You work for the United Press, do you not?"

I said I did.

"Do you know a fellow named Bob Keyserlingk?" he asked. Keyserlingk, a cousin of the famous philosopher, comes of old Baltic noble stock, and was born a Russian citizen. Like thousands of others, he wandered the world on a Nansen passport after the Red Revolution and the civil wars put an end to the old order for the "Baltic Barons." He finally settled in Canada, where he is General Manager of British United Press.

I said I had known Keyserlingk for more than ten years.

"That's very interesting," said the *Sonderfuehrer*. "He's my cousin."

A liaison of that sort can sometimes be tremendously valuable, and there is no doubt in my mind that it influenced von Sivers, the *Sonderfuehrer*, strongly in my favor. During the rest of the interview, which lasted about three hours, he was extremely pleasant and made no serious effort to pump me.

At one point he reached into a drawer and pulled out a large diagram giving the British and American order of battle on the western front in great detail, considerably greater detail than I had ever had occasion to see.

"You will gather from this," he said, "that there's not much you could tell us a month after your capture, even if you cared to."

Von Sivers told me I would probably be held at Diez until word

had come from Berlin on what to do with me. I told him that I was entitled to the normal officer's treatment, and that I would prefer to be sent on to a permanent officers' camp and given no special handling at all. He said he would see what he could do, but I got the distinct impression that I'll eventually be sent on to the Propaganda Ministry, which has no reason to like the color of my hair. My feelings are mixed on that prospect. I would like to see Berlin again, because there has never been a comprehensive report on allied air raid damage and with my knowledge of the city I could very quickly assess it, but I hate the idea of becoming conspicuous and of being given some sort of "special" status which might be highly unpleasant.

Von Sivers and I talked about a lot of subjects, with emphasis on Russia, American intervention in Europe, and other stock "problems." He was particularly interested in the chances for a new world order after the war, and complained that allied statesmen had left Germany little hope of participating on an equal and "honorable" basis.

"You people don't seem to understand," he said, "that you can't destroy Germany without creating a vacuum in the heart of Europe and dooming the entire continent to chaos."

I told him I didn't think there was any intention of destroying Germany, but that certainly there was every determination to wipe out her ability to make war and to obliterate every vestige of National Socialism. I said I thought the German people must be re-educated if it were ever to be purged of twelve years of Nazi indoctrination, and that for such a program to succeed we must grant enough concessions in trade and in access to raw materials to make a decent life possible inside Germany.

Von Sivers complained that allied plans called for the complete liquidation of German industry. I said that I doubted this, and that to me it would be a ruinous policy to carry control of the Reich's production beyond the destruction of her ability to arm. I said I saw no reason why, if the German people cooperated, there need be anything despotic about the system of controls.

It is very hard to talk on things like that with a German without becoming embroiled in a long philosophical debate, but von Sivers was not interested in that sort of thing. It struck me that like most soldiers in any sort of contact with the front, he had few illusions on how the war would end, that he was not interested in the fate of the Nazi party, which his class has no reason to thank, but that he was dismayed at the deepening abyss into which Germany must one day topple. Our insistence on unconditional surrender undoubtedly was wise policy

because it was simple and straightforward, but there is no doubt that millions of thinking Germans feel it leaves them no alternative but to fight on. Whatever their feelings about National Socialism may be, they have succumbed to Goebbels' propaganda that surrender means "Communist chaos."

When von Sivers conducted me back up the worn stone stairway to my cell, we bumped into Henri again. The latter promptly turned on his charm and succeeded in persuading the *Sonderfuehrer* that he should count my interrogation as finished and release me from solitary confinement. The result was that I spent last night in a large room with six beds where officers whose questioning has been wound up are held pending shipment to a camp. Henri and four American officers are in the room with me, and we are as comfortable as anyone could expect to be.

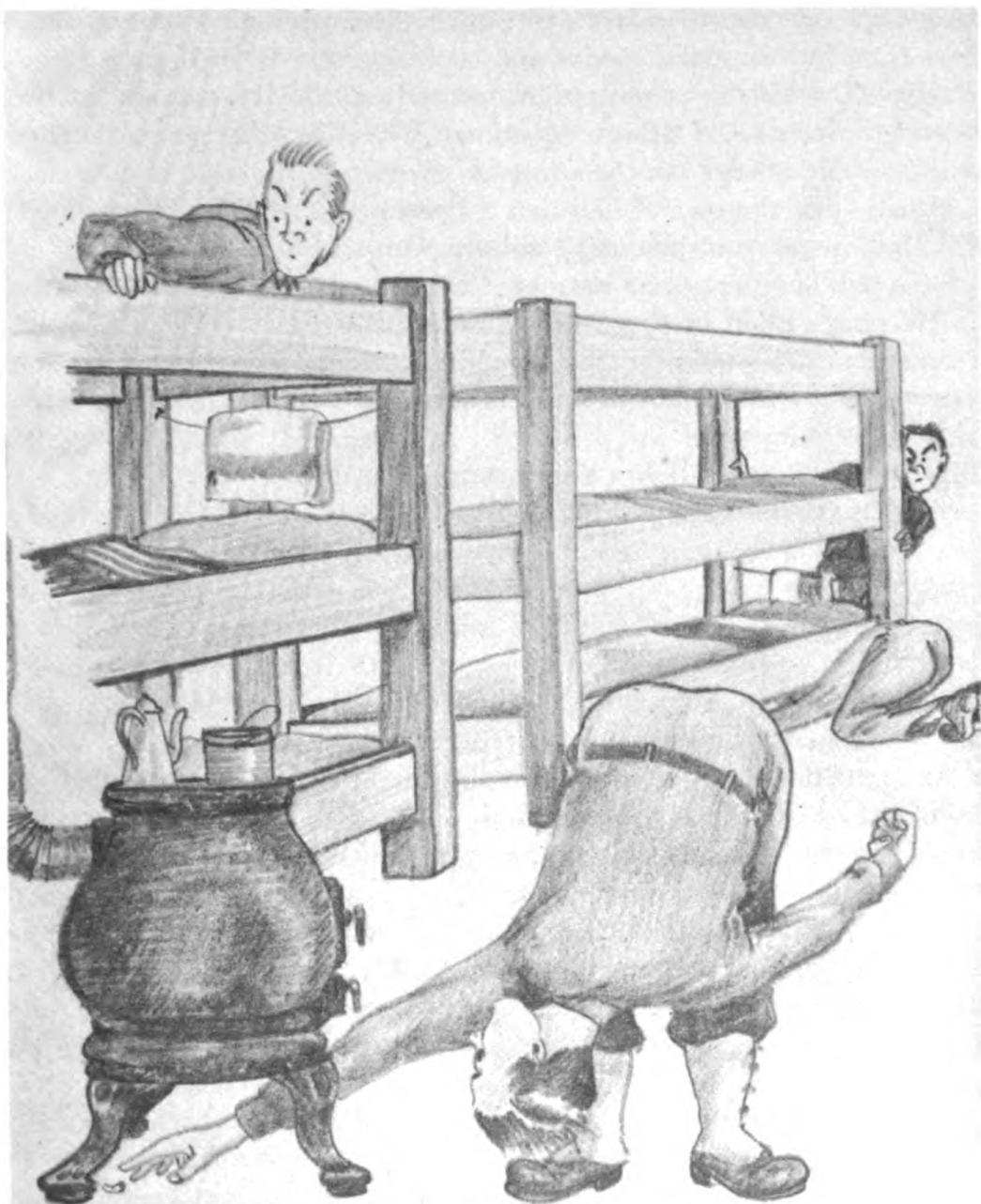
As he left, von Sivers handed me my diary, and said he saw no real objections to it "although other people might think differently." He said he supposed I'd be writing a book on it.

I received a whole Red Cross package this morning, and haven't had such a thrill since I found an electric train under the tree one Christmas. The moment when you slit open the heavy cardboard box and regard the assortment inside is beyond doubt the high point of your career as a prisoner. Months later, you can hope for the arrival of the first letter from home, and in the vague future is the day of liberation. But the first Red Cross parcel comes at a time when you are still off balance and unsure of yourself, and its morale effect is even more important than the smokes and food it contains.

My first parcel contained: five packages of Camels, two chocolate bars, two bars of soap, a quart of powdered milk, two ounces of coffee concentrate, a can each of salmon, corned beef, spiced ham and meat spread, a pound of margarine, a half pound of cheese, a half pound of sugar, a pound of raisins, jam and biscuits. The people who plan and ship these packages have the deep thanks of every prisoner.

The others have had their own first packages only a day or two, and the novelty has not yet worn off for them, either. We have been eating, making coffee, or planning meals most of the day. This evening we concocted a corned beef hash with the aid of potatoes fished out of the familiar Limburg soup and some onions which Henri had "organized" in the nether regions of the castle.

Henri treats all Germans hereabouts with the amused disdain which can be managed only by a well-born Englishman or Frenchman, and which always throws them into confusion. He has collected a respect-



"Butt!"

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able stock of extra food items out of the German staff kitchen, plus a variety of knives, forks, spoons and cooking utensils, including a large chamber pot which was guaranteed unused and which serves as a mixing bowl for various Red Cross concoctions. If the Germans protest at these activities, he shrugs off the protests. If pushed, he says in atrocious German—just the sort of German a Frenchman is expected to speak:

"Let me ask you: just who's winning this war, you or we?"

To date, he has gotten no more violent reaction than a splutter.

We have filled in the time between meals today with bridge and reading. Our library at the moment consists of "The Inimitable Jeeves," a life of Mirabeau in German, and a volume which presumably is recommended for prisoners. It is entitled "Live Successfully. Book Two. You Need Not Feel Inferior."

All in all, we don't.

Diez Castle

O C T O B E R 1 1

THERE was founded with due ceremony today a brotherhood known as "The Ancient and Honorable Order of the Thunder Mug," which draws its title from our favorite eating utensil, Henri's chamber pot. The brotherhood is to be open to all who pass through the Diez interrogation center, and they need only sign their names on the wall under ours, and under the crest of the society.

The coat of arms which I drew on the wall with a pencil stub, consists of a chamber pot rampant on a slightly lopsided shield. Crossed above the shield are a turnip and a sugar beet. Below it is the brotherhood's motto, a pig latin slogan of a certain American armored division which reads "*Ne illigitimi carborundum.*"

Freely translated, this means, "Don't let the bastards wear you down."

We all hope to get out of here before some German becomes too curious and asks for a rendition of the Latin.

Henri and the others were sent off this afternoon, and by now are presumably locked in their box cars and off on the interminable trip to Poland. At least they will have Red Cross food with them on this journey, and needn't rely on German generosity to keep their bellies filled.

I had hoped to go with them, but at the last minute was told that there was no word from Berlin, and that I would remain indefinitely here. Von Sivers says I will undoubtedly be sent on from Berlin to a permanent camp of some sort, and that he is sure I will be exchanged

within a relatively short time. I hope he's right. During the last month I have gotten a pretty clear picture of what Germany is thinking about, what keeps her fighting, and what she hopes and fears from the post-war world. If I can talk to a few people in Berlin, and *then* get out before the end of the European war, it will make a grand story. I'm afraid the "if" is a very big one.

Von Sivers had me down again for a lengthy conversation late last night. He wanted to talk more about the post-war world. I don't think he wanted anything out of me for official purposes. He is trying to find some basis on which he, personally, can hope for a decent chance after the war. There must be millions like him, and the search must be very discouraging.

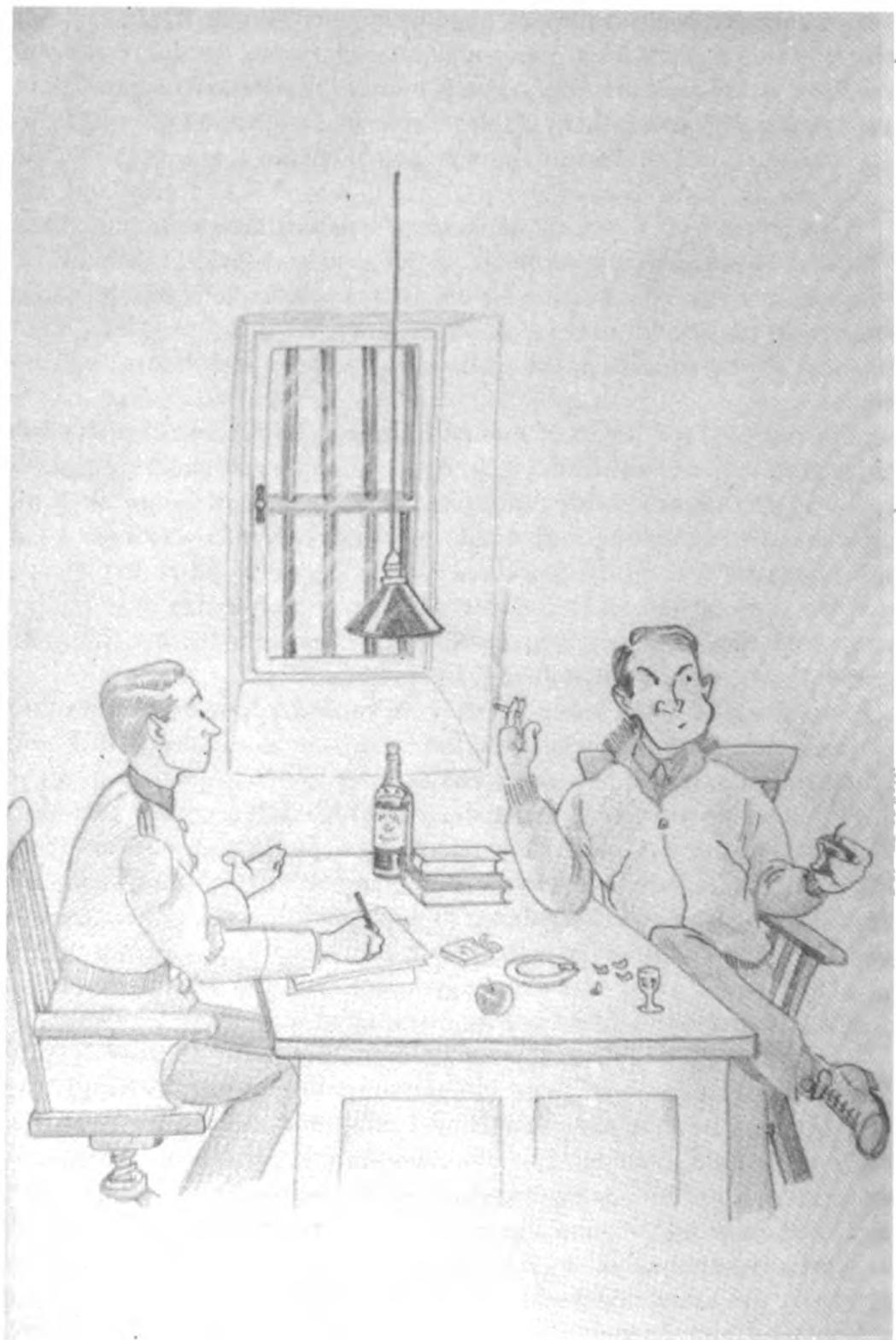
He pulled out a bottle of French brandy with the remark that "I'm not trying to get you drunk." I accepted a couple of drinks with pleasure, and chain-smoked his cigarettes. It is a point of honor with all prisoners to eat, smoke and drink anything they can scrounge from any German. I carefully pocketed all the cigarette butts, explaining that my present state of Red Cross affluence is presumably only temporary. Von Sivers admitted he usually saves butts too, "when the prisoners don't clean out my ash tray."

I finally asked him a question I have wanted to put to several other German officers and have abandoned each time as too delicate. I told him that the impression abroad was that Hitler, in the hanging of the July twentieth plotters and the decrees which followed the plot, had gone out of his way to slap the Germany army in the face, and that thousands of professional officers deeply resented it. I asked him the truth of this, and whether officers as a rule felt the convicted generals had been traitorous to Germany's best interests.

"The whole affair was a very great shock," was all he would say. The remark unfortunately can be interpreted two ways.

I am alone tonight except for Lieutenant Ernest Ankrom of Williamsport, Ohio, who was one of the crowd from Strasbourg and who was brought here at the same time I was. He had an interrogation officer who was considerably more unpleasant than von Sivers, but even so he got out of solitary much quicker than the average prisoner.

This evening, we were visited for an hour or more by the second in command at the castle, a lieutenant named Wilhelm Gosevich, who formerly was a business man in Brooklyn and who speaks English with a nearly perfect American accent. Gosevich says he left Brooklyn because of the anti-German boycott in the United States which followed Hitler's persecution of the Jews, and that he intended to return but



was caught up by the German conscription laws a year or so before the war.

Gosevich appeared to be talking freely, but whether or not he had a purpose is another matter. He classed the anti-Jewish campaign as a bad mistake by Germany, not apparently on moral grounds but because it had helped turn the world against Hitler and therefore had made his job more difficult. He affected to be very discouraged about the war. We were both extremely reticent about committing ourselves in any way, and Gosevich finally left after smoking a half dozen or so of my cigarettes. He promised me some pipe tobacco in return.

The door to this room is open all day, and we are permitted to leave it to go to the latrine. It is locked at night, but as long as we maintain the blackout, we may keep the lights lit as long as we wish. At that, we are bored enough with sitting around to turn in by 10:30 or 11 P.M. The mattresses here have plenty of straw and the blankets are new and thick. The whole layout is sheer luxury after the conditions under which we have lived for the last month.

Diez Castle

O C T O B E R 1 2

THE storybook stuff doesn't stop with the exterior facade of Diez Castle, with its cells in the keep or the dungeons which no doubt exist far down below in the solid rock. Diez also has its fair prisoner.

The mystery woman is in American uniform, and wears the blue U.S.A. on a white triangle which is the flash of civilians attached to the army for specific jobs. True to the storybook tradition, she has been seen in lonely solitude, pacing a stretch of battlement where no other prisoners are allowed.

We are permitted down in the castle courtyard in small groups for a half hour at a time. The GI prisoners from the barrack room across the hall, who discovered the woman prisoner, say they tried to shout greetings to her and strike up an acquaintance, but that she gave no sign of having heard them and that the guard quickly put a stop to the whole effort.

Whoever she is, she has given both guards and prisoners a lively topic of conversation. The svelte spy theory has the support of most of the guards and a fair proportion of the prisoners. All anyone knows definitely is that she was captured a few days ago in the Moselle valley, up toward Luxembourg, with an American Lieutenant Commander

who is being kept in very strict isolation at the other end of this floor.

Capturing three correspondents was quite a shock, and I have always felt, something of a let-down, for the *Kampfgruppe Ottenbacher*. It couldn't have confused the Germans nearly as much, however, as taking a naval officer along a river which can just about float a rowboat, and finding a uniformed woman with him.

I have seen the Lieutenant Commander only once, when we bumped into each other at the latrine door. The castle was echoing to the sound of hundreds of American heavy bombers thundering eastward above the valley, and he grinned and said, "Boy that sure sounds like music to me." Then the guard hustled him on.

We have now acquired Captain Monge and two officers from the British fifty-second Division, which was recruited mainly in the Scotch lowlands, and the three newcomers are gorging themselves out of their parcels while we advise them on cookery with all the superiority of two days' experience.

A German officer just burst into the room shouting in the usual drill-sergeant bellow, and accused us of flashing lights out over the town, presumably as a signal to allied aircraft. We told him not to be ridiculous, that we never touched the blackout blinds once they were up, and that he'd better look elsewhere for a culprit. He stormed out, threatening everything from shooting to a ban on all lights at all times, as in the solitary confinement cells. When he had gone a guard came in and apologized for him, saying that the town police complained every night about the castle's poor blackout, that everyone knew it came from the officers' quarters but nobody dared say so, and that the officer in question was always trying to intimidate prisoners.

Diez Castle
O C T O B E R 1 4

THE only news of any interest the last two days has been that the mystery woman on the battlement is Mrs. Gertrude Legendre of New York, a sister of Laddie Sandford, the polo player. Aside from that fact, the mystery is as deep as ever. Everyone is hoping the Germans finally finish with the questioning of the Lieutenant Commander, so that we can satisfy our curiosity.

Von Sivers had me downstairs for another conversation this afternoon. When I asked whether I could not accompany the prisoner transport leaving this evening, he said there had still been no reply from

Berlin, and that I must wait. He suggested that I might care to write out my ideas of the post-war world, but I skated around that one by telling him I was sure there were enough people doing that already.

Lieutenant Gosevich dropped in casually, perched on the bed, and with studied offhandedness put a pretty crude proposition up to me. He said it would be a wonderful idea for me to travel through the Reich under escort but otherwise with complete freedom, "seeing everything you want and talking with everyone you want to meet, so that you can go out and tell the world the true story about Germany."

I told him I would class that sort of thing as treason, and that in any event nobody outside Germany would ever believe a word written under such conditions. That's the sort of proposal I have been waiting for ever since my capture, and I wonder whether they'll make any attempt to use pressure when I reach Berlin.

I did manage to stick Gosevich for a two-ounce can of English pipe tobacco, just about the biggest windfall I've had since I became a prisoner, and he threw in a roll of toilet paper, an exceedingly scarce commodity around these parts. Altogether, Diez has worked out very well except for the German rations, which are lugged here over the hills from Limburg. As a result we get the same awful soup stone cold instead of mildly warm.

We have a couple of tin-can stoves in the barrack room, and stoke them with scraps of cardboard and wood scrounged in the junk heap in the castle courtyard. The resulting smoke is incredible, and although we cook on the sill with the window open, most of it blows into the room. It takes a long time to get anything cooked, but we have managed a variety of dishes like sauteed potatoes, salmon and potato patties, hamburgers, welsh rarebit and the staple corned beef hash.

Diez Castle
O C T O B E R 15

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROBERT E. JENNINGS, of Dallas, Texas and New York, the naval officer who was captured with Mrs. Legendre, was finally released from solitary today, and brought with him into the barracks room the best piece of news I could get.

He says that three weeks ago, in the Ritz Bar in Paris, Bill Hearst of I.N.S. told him the details of my capture, which Bill had heard from John Mecklin. This means that within a few days of the regrettable affair at Chaumont, Mother knew that I was safe. It also means that



anything which can be done by the U.P. to speed up my exchange has already been taken care of, and that the German authorities, if they had had any such intention in the first place, will not be able to claim lack of knowledge of where I am.

Nothing which has happened to date, except for Gosevich's proposition, has indicated that the Nazi authorities have it in for me or that they will try to bring pressure on me, but until I reach Berlin I won't be certain. Commander Jennings says Bill Hearst told him a lot of people in Paris were very worried what the Nazis would do to me. At the moment, at least, they are worrying a lot more than I am. The chief worries of a prisoner are food, warmth and when he's going to be locked up in another box car for one of those suicide jaunts across Germany.

Jennings also cleared up the Legendre mystery. She was assigned to him as interpreter, he says, on a mission to Belgium which normally would have taken them nowhere near the front. Their car broke down somewhere not far from the Luxembourg border, and was towed into Luxembourg city for repairs. While they waited, a friend in the army suggested they might like to cross the Moselle into Germany on a short excursion. In Wallendorf, the village the Germans say was razed by American "brigands," they ran into a German trap like the one which nabbed us at Chaumont.

The Germans promptly decided they were an "espionage team," whatever that is, and have been trying ever since to find something deep and sinister about the whole incident. They have just about decided to give up, and are wondering just what to do with Mrs. Legendre. The *Wehrmacht* is not equipped to handle female militarists. It seems obvious to everyone here she should be sent home by the shortest route, with none of the delays involved in exchange. During the battle of the Cotentin peninsula this summer, we sent a large group of German nurses taken at Cherbourg through the battle lines under a half-hour truce arrangement, and nobody demanded anything in exchange.

For an hour and a half this morning, the sky was filled with the pulsing drone of hundreds of American heavy bombers and hundreds more fighters above them, forging overhead above the clouds and then returning, headed toward the southwest. By the time they returned, the clouds had broken, and occasionally, by craning out the narrow window, we could see tight-flying, three-plane "vees," three or four "vees" to each closely knit group, sweep across the gaps between the cloud banks, furrowing the sky behind them with the white of their

condensation trails. Far above, fighters traced brief white plumes as they turned on their lofty guard mount.

There is no doubt who owns the air this side of the Rhine, and on deep into Germany. With the progress of the air offensive this last summer, pilots consistently have reported deeper and deeper penetrations before fighter opposition was encountered. Time was when the "Abbeville Kids" and other crack squadrons, in their Focke Wulff 190's and Messerschmitt 109's, swarmed up from the French coast to meet each onslaught, and when other units took over the job in relays to contest every yard all the way in and out of Germany. That was up to February, when the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces crippled German fighter production in one fantastic week of good weather, and when they began destroying fighters faster than Germany could replace them. Thereafter pilots began reporting no opposition up to the German border; a little later they discovered they could penetrate as far as Brunswick free of challenge. Finally came the day when German planes, in the air on the flanks of the great formations, seemed to hold off attacking until they were sure the day's target was vital enough to warrant giving battle.

The sky of western Germany belongs these days to the Americans from dawn to dusk, and to the massed strength of the British heavies by night. There was no audible antiaircraft fire today, and no fighters were visible. There is a big fighter airdrome only five miles or so up the valley from here, and even the Germans notice that when a raid is on, the Messerschmitts never rise until the attacking formation is well past. Then they sweep low down the valley and gradually rise over the rim of rolling hills. A guard came in during the alarm today and discovered us all at the windows.

"I suppose you noticed the *Luftwaffe* takes Sundays off," he said.

Across the valley from our window runs one of the key railroads connecting the Rhine valley with eastern Germany. All night the long trains shuttle back and forth, and in the early morning and at dusk we can make out that they carry guns, tanks and motor transport for the front, or shot-up equipment for the repair shops in the interior. During the day the line is idle for hours at a stretch, and only occasionally does a train sneak through. Twice we have seen hospital cars attached to long freight trains full of war supplies.

Diez Castle
OCTOBER 16

TODAY Bob Jennings and I met one of the bravest men we will ever run across. He is a Dutchman named Bob Terbstra, who lives in Arnhem.

Terbstra parachuted into Holland ahead of the Allied troops, on a secret mission of one kind or another, and was captured during the Arnhem show. When he was picked up by the Germans, he wore American uniform, and fortunately for him, he spoke almost perfect English.

No Dutchman captured under those circumstances could hope to escape the firing squad. Terbstra did it, and the story came out shortly after he arrived in the barrack room.

Bob looks like an average American Second Lieutenant. When he entered with his Red Cross parcel under one arm, we walked over to introduce ourselves. He gave us his name, said his parents lived on a farm in Ohio, Ohio, and that he had gone to the "University of Philadelphia." He must have caught a certain show of surprise in one face or another. A short time later he took Jennings and myself aside, and told us what had happened.

At the moment of his capture, he decided his only chance lay in convincing the Germans that he was an American, an officer in the U.S. Army. He improvised a story on the spot, told them his family had emigrated ten years or so before, and that he had been educated in the United States and was now a citizen. He claimed loss of his papers, but gave them a serial number which seemed to satisfy them. He had a ticklish moment when the German interrogating officer noticed there were only six figures in the serial number, and remarked he had been a long time in the army to be still a second lieutenant—the army ran out of six-figure numbers a long, long time ago. Terbstra told him men of foreign birth always got slow promotion, and the German nodded understandingly.

Jennings asked him if he had ever been in the United States. Terbstra said he had not, and added with a grin that he thought he'd like to see his homeland sometime soon.

We told him we'd like to suggest a few amendments in his story, that there was no such place as Ohio, Ohio, and that he meant the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Terbstra began to realize there had been a few holes in the yarn. Jennings and I racked our

brains for a few odd details about Penn, but about all we could muster were a few old football scores, The Mask and Wig Club, and a beautifully vague description of the campus. We did our best to patch up a story.

One big danger was that Terbstra would become involved in conversation with some perfectly innocent American and give himself away. One never knows whether the Germans have microphones planted in the camps, or what conversations reach their ears, through planted stool pigeons or by some other means. The danger of this sort of give-away was borne in on us within an hour.

There was a *bona fide* lieutenant in the room who asked Terbstra where he had gone to school. Terbstra told him Pennsylvania, and gave him a year of graduation, all part of our build-up.

"Did you ever play basketball?" asked the new friend. "You sure have the build for it." Terbstra made the mistake of saying he had.

"Say, I went to Cornell," beamed the lieutenant. "Do you remember that Penn-Cornell game in . . . ?"

Terbstra obviously needed quick help. I jumped in with a quick dribble to the invitation tournaments at Madison Square Garden, and Jennings was off on football as the only game worth watching, or something of the sort. We later told Terbstra he'd better tell everyone he had been a serious student with no time for extra-curricular activities.

Jennings and I were in the courtyard this afternoon when Mrs. Legendre appeared on her battlement, and were permitted to chat with her for a half hour or so. She is being well-treated, and Lieutenant Gosevich has promised her that everything will be done to exchange her. She was in particularly high spirits because she had been able to wash both her hair and her shirt on the same day. It's a great problem here to get yourself laundered piecemeal, keeping enough clothes on your back at any one time to avoid freezing.

Diez Castle
OCTOBER 17

IN A half hour or so I leave for Berlin under guard. About the only thing attractive in the prospect is that, being a lone prisoner, I do not warrant the use of a perfectly good box-car and will ride in an ordinary civilian train.

Bob Jennings and I were alone when the Germans came in to say I was to prepare to leave. The rest had been taken off to Limburg to

wait for another mass transport. Terbstra was among them, still undetected. Bob and I had been playing gin rummy all afternoon, and the cards had run all my way. When we were interrupted, he owed me fifty-five dollars. I told him I didn't want to accept payment without giving him a chance to get it back, and that we'd better wait until we met some time in New York.

"No, I want you to take it now," he said. "I've got thousands of francs in my shoe, and even if they don't find it I never can spend it all. Maybe the money will do you some good some time."

The result is that I now have 2,500 francs shoved into the bottom of my knapsack. If my searches are over, perhaps I can use it.

Berlin

OCTOBER 18

THIS first Berlin entry is being written by the light of a weak electric bulb on an iron double-decker bed in the camp at Zehlendorf West, on the southwest outskirts of the city, where I was delivered in darkness tonight.

It has been five and a half years since I last used a Berlin dateline. Then I had just returned from watching the rape of Prague, and Hitler was beginning to turn pressure on the Poles. We all knew war was coming, and felt it would be only a matter of months before all Europe was aflame, and when I boarded the Nord Express at Friedrichstrasse Station I was heartily grateful to be fighting clear of Germany and moving my typewriter to London. There, at least, I would be on the side where my sympathies were bound to lie.

In the intervening years I had watched the line of the fire sweep first across Europe and then into Africa. I had seen Warsaw blasted, had witnessed the perversion of the Balkans, had watched the bombast of the Italian build-up for war, had experienced the collapse of France. I had been in England through the hand-to-mouth desperation of the days of the Battle of Britain, and had learned to know London during the *blitz*.

Until the day when we entered Tunis, less than eighteen months ago, my small share of the war had been one long succession of destruction conceived in Berlin. Except in the Battle of Britain, it had always been Nazi power which dominated, and even the victory over the *Luftwaffe* had seemed then only a reprieve from catastrophe. My return to Berlin today set the seal, for me, on the certain victory to come. Defeat is in

the air of the battered hulk of the capital, and you sense it immediately despite all the show of determination to fight out the war to the last.

It is going to be hard to describe my reactions to Berlin without sounding sadistic. The damage I have seen in the course of a few hours in the center of Berlin today told me beyond shadow of doubt that Warsaw, Rotterdam and Belgrade, and a score of British cities, have been amply avenged on the city which ordered their destruction. In the faces of the Berlin population I saw suffering, strain and blank dullness—the same dullness of despair I had seen in the war's first year on the faces of the refugee columns fleeing down the roads of Poland and France in blind terror of the Nazi *panzers*. No one could jubilate at such a sight, but I can't hold down my satisfaction at a debt repaid in full.

Berlin is a very staunch city. It has taken more punishment by far than London ever took, and it knows there is more to come. There is no obvious evidence that Berliners will not continue to withstand the bombing, the bad housing and the bad food, or that they won't continue to heed Goebbels' clarion call for a last-ditch fight. They probably will. Like most other Germans I have met, they undoubtedly still hope for some new weapon which will turn the tide of war, or that Hitler will regain the magic touch which almost gave him world empire without a fight. But subconsciously, at least, they now know that the war is lost, that there is no hope whatever for a compromise peace, and that continuing the fight to the end will simply ravage the country. No population not as submissive as the German, and no population not as perverted by twelve years of lies, would take this fate without protest.

We reached Berlin at 2:00 P.M. after a fourteen-hour trip in a train so jammed it was impossible to leave the compartment. At least 100 people were squeezed into the corridor outside, with their baggage, their lunch packages and their bawling babies. Three people sat or leaned in the toilet. This was a civilian train with a considerable leavening of soldiers, party officials, and workers in the dirty brown uniform of the Todt Organization, which builds Germany's roads and fortifications. It was hopelessly inadequate for the traffic, and at each big station we left hundreds of travelers clamoring on the platform for a chance to fight their way aboard. Twice, at stations with loud speaker systems, an announcement was broadcast to the effect that the train due to leave at such a time for such a place would depart two or three hours later, and by an alternate route. Once passengers were informed there was no guarantee of arrival.

The answer was obvious at a score of points along the route diag-

onally northeast across Germany. We passed blasted stations, wrecked freight yards or newly-filled bomb holes every ten or twelve miles. All along the right of way were scattered spare ties, rails or switches, ready to be manhandled into place in event of air attack. I understand that the Germans, with many million slave laborers, can mobilize such masses of manpower at short notice that damage to the rails themselves is repaired very quickly. This confirms the lesson of France, that the only effective means of paralyzing a railway is to attack the bridges, the repair shops and the locomotives and rolling stock, which cannot easily be replaced.

I rode with two guards in the sheer luxury of a first-class compartment with an assortment of civilians and two young officers invalided home from the front. Both had arms in plaster casts, and one of them was minus a leg.

Because the guards were strange to me, I had pretended not to speak German, and was amply rewarded by the ability to listen to the flow of chat back and forth across the compartment. There was a lot of heavy jocularity about the trip, and I got the impression they had all been told to laugh even if it killed them. There were a lot of pretty dismal remarks about the war, and a good few tirades about allied "air gangsters," each well rounded out with appropriate gory details. With each turnover in the occupants, I was detected as a prisoner inside a short time, and inevitably there were a few choice remarks about the insult done upon Germans in forcing them to ride in the same compartment with prisoners.

For a while I was amused by the outraged sensibilities around me, but finally the indignation became so tiresome that I began nagging my traveling companions by smoking one Camel after another and ostentatiously eating chocolate, cheese, biscuits and corned beef out of the new Red Cross parcel I had wrangled before leaving Diez. The Germans, with their two-cigarette-per-day ration, were smoking very sparingly indeed, and the only food in evidence was a few unhealthy looking apples and pears and some sandwiches of gray rye bread with some sort of a film of meat paste or a thin sliver of sausage. My food came in for a good deal of comment, including the remark that "the German Government never should give prisoners such fine things to eat." I had a quiet laugh on that, and smoked another cigarette.

Finally, as the train pulled into the Potsdamer station and I loaded up with my coat, my haversack and my Red Cross parcel, I succumbed to a sudden impulse, turned to the compartment and said in German,

"Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for a most instructive trip." I did not wait to hear their reaction.

En route to Berlin we had passed through Magdeburg, where the visible bomb damage was considerable. It was nothing compared with the approaches to Berlin along the railroad in from Potsdam.

The last five miles of this trip, from Lichtenfelde in to Potsdamer station, are a ride through a ghost of a city. On each side, the tall, five-story apartment buildings of which Berlin is largely composed stand as skeletons. Their tile roofs and the wooden framework which bound the masonry together have all collapsed into the basements, and the walls themselves seem about to topple. Occasionally there is a huge blank scar where there are no buildings and almost no rubble. It marks the spot where a block-buster hit. A few blocks of buildings still stand along the railway, and more can be seen down the side streets, but they have no windows and only a few remnants of roof, and look only half habitable. It seemed that three quarters of the damage had been caused by fire, the remainder by the awful blast of the two, four and six ton bombs. This is area bombing at its most terrible.

When we arrived at the Potsdamer station, which still operates its trains but is otherwise wholly gutted, it developed that the guards were both in Berlin for the first time and had no idea where to go. I discovered them bending over a little slip of paper, reading an address on it and shaking their heads in confusion. I asked them if I could help.

They said things were very complicated, and showed me the address of that of a building about 300 yards from the old United Press office. I said I could easily guide them there. This was obviously completely out of order, and there was more head scratching before they finally agreed. I chose a route which took us through the Potsdamer Platz, center of Berlin, and through stretches of Unter den Linden, Friedrichstrasse and Leipzigerstrasse, the three principal thoroughfares in the heart of Berlin. The route was pretty roundabout, but the guards were too busy gaping at destruction to notice that fact.

Of the big government buildings along the Wilhelmstrasse, only the older section of the Reichs Chancellory has been hit by high explosive: a small bomb blew off one corner. Hitler's own squat, dreary building connected with it is by all signs intact. The Air Ministry has been somewhat damaged, and the Foreign Office was largely gutted by fire. The Propaganda Ministry is untouched, but across the square from it the Hotel Kaiserhof, where Hitler always lived before Hinden-

burg called him to the Chancellory, is nothing but four smoke-stained walls.

The British Embassy in the Wilhelmstrasse and the French Embassy on the Pariser Platz, at the head of Unter den Linden, are both burned out; but the American Embassy survives. I was told today that Foreign Office men who rushed to their offices when the building caught fire were horrified to find the Berlin fire department busily putting out the blaze in the British Embassy while their own building next door flamed to the skies, and that it was only after much persuasion that the firemen agreed to leave the embassy to its fate.

With the exception of one hotel, all the buildings on Potsdamer Platz have been gutted. Wertheim's huge department store on the Leipzigerstrasse is a shell, and does business only in the basement. About half of the buildings I could see on Unter den Linden are destroyed. In the Friedrichstrasse, great cascades of bomb rubble block the sidewalks every few yards and have spilled out in some cases half across the roadway. The Germans, who at one time prided themselves on quick clean-up of refuse and quick reconstruction of battered buildings, have now given up the unequal fight and simply sweep the bricks and glass and stonework and charred timbers into heaps.

Berlin streets are almost deserted. Even during the *blitz*, London's daytime traffic looked almost normal, and even at night people crowded the streets and squares in the center of town. The crowds at midday in Berlin's center are meager. Aside from official automobiles and a few military vehicles, there is almost no traffic. Most of the bus lines have been suspended, and streetcars run only occasionally. The people are better dressed than I had expected to find them. Many of them wear wooden-soled shoes, but they seem to have enough warm clothing, and it is no more threadbare than the clothing in London or Birmingham in the sixth year of the war.

What strikes you most in the streets is the utter glumness and drabness of everything. The glumness is in the people's eyes, in their bad complexions, and in their walk. It is in the dusty rubble piles and the gaunt skeletons of buildings and the dirty windows. It is in the lack-luster store displays, which seem to say, "We haven't anything to sell you, so why pretend?" In London and Paris and other war capitals, the shop windows at least put up a brave front.

The interview at the Propaganda Ministry this afternoon turned out considerably less than awful, and from everything I could make out in the hour or more I was there, there is no disposition to get rough with me.

I found myself confronted by three ministry officials whom I had known over five years ago, and one acquaintance from the Foreign Office. The spokesman for the group was a certain Dr. Suendermann, who in 1939 was just another minor functionary but who now, to judge from the size of his office, must be second or third man to Goebbels himself. Suendermann, who has a Bavarian accent you could spread with a knife, suffers from a common Nazi failing, infatuation with his own words. The interview to all intents and purposes was a monologue, with the two other Propaganda Ministry men nodding sagely from time to time, and the Foreign Office man listening with what I thought was a slightly tired smile.

He is Herr von StrempeL, who until Pearl Harbor was a Counsellor of the German Embassy in Washington, and who now acts as watchdog over the British and American press in the News Division of the Foreign Office. Von StrempeL, who is a career diplomat and who never classed with foreign correspondents as a Nazi, is to have charge of my case, and I am very grateful it didn't fall into a lot worse hands.

Within the first two or three minutes, it became obvious that joviality was to be the keynote of the conversation. Never in my four years in Berlin had I been able to feel at my ease with a Nazi caught in a jovial mood, because there was something too fundamentally phoney about it—I remember a beer party given in Nuremberg at the 1938 Party Convention by Heinrich Himmler, who with Heydrich and a choice assortment of other thugs went around clapping all his guests chummily on the shoulder, and we could all feel the ghost of Lucrezia Borgia nodding approval—but it was a definite relief on this occasion.

I took the opportunity of forestalling any ideas the gentlemen concerned may have had of confronting me with the neutral correspondents still in Berlin, which had been tried on other people in the past, by telling them that if such a thing were tried, I would either refuse to say anything whatever or would say a few things which nobody would like. Suendermann said nothing of the sort was intended.

He remarked that my attitude toward National Socialism was well-known, and that I had not been very friendly to Germany. I told him it was hardly surprising, all things considered, adding that it might interest him to know that Soviet Russia refused me a visa for one reason or another, just about a year ago.

It was obvious that Suendermann was more interested today in putting over the current party line than he was in anything else, and after the passing of a box of cigarettes and a few bad cigars, he started in. It ran as follows:

The war is now stable on all fronts, thanks to the fact that the Americans outran their supplies and that the Russians overextended their communications. The Germans have been able to consolidate. From this point on, the war will be a matter not of sweeping advances but of hard, slow and very bloody slogging.

The entire German nation is prepared to fight for every acre of ground because it knows that surrender means extinction and a "Bolshevik chaos" which will sweep Europe from the Baltic to Gibraltar and from the Black Sea to the westermost tip of Ireland. It sees in Finland, Rumania and Bulgaria the imposition of Russian peace terms which result in the liquidation by one means or another of all elements capable of combating Communism, the "mobilization of the street" against the nation's stable influences, and the gradual imposition of a Communist regime which will inevitably swallow all bungling bourgeois factions because they have no "idea" with which to fight the Communist "idea."

Britain and America must therefore be prepared next spring for an unparalleled blood bath along the western front, and will be able to advance only by wading through an enemy willing to die to the last man. Suendermann said the carnage would dwarf the casualties of last-war battles like Verdun and the Somme, and added:

"They might as well realize right now that we are going to fight until they suddenly discover that the price is too heavy to pay. Then, perhaps, they will see the light."

This, of course, is the party line. It is based on two fundamental misconceptions, from my point of view. The first is the theory, with which the Germans have fooled themselves a dozen times, that the Russians are overextended and incapable of further advance. The second is that the governments of Great Britain and the United States are so weak-kneed that they will leap at a chance to compromise if casualties become high.

I told Suendermann that he was entirely wrong if he thought public opinion in the Anglo-Saxon world was incapable of taking long casualty lists, and assured him that it was overwhelmingly in favor of close co-operation with the Soviet Union. He waved the remark aside with the implication, which I have run across in several other conversations, that the average Britisher or American really likes the Germans better than the Russians, if he only had the sense to realize it, and that one day he will recognize the fact.

However flimsy this party line may be, it is impressive because of the strangle-hold which the Nazis still maintain on all organs of public

expression, of their absolute police power, and of the extent to which the rank and file of Germany has been perverted by twelve years' propaganda.

Beyond a shadow of doubt, everyone in Germany wants peace now, but only on a basis of compromise with the west which will either leave the Reich free to fight Russia or, better yet, range Britain and the United States on her side. And the average German, who now lives in a strange world of fears and fantastic hopes, seems convinced that the west secretly is sympathetic to some such arrangement. The antiBritish and antiRussian press in the United States furnishes Goebbels liberally with quotations which can be used to stimulate this delusion.

The Propaganda Ministry at the moment has pulled out all the stops in its assault on the "Morgenthau Plan," which is held up as a horrid example of the "Jewish arch-plot" to wipe out Germany. Suendermann said the plan "comes from a rush of blood to the head."

There is no doubt that our repetition of the unconditional surrender terms and our publication of projects like the "Morgenthau Plan" have greatly stiffened German determination. Suendermann said our free press policy "just plays into Goebbels' hands." I told him I could vouch for the very real determination among all the United Nations to prosecute this war, for once, to a complete and devastating finish both in Europe and the Far East, and that as democratic nations we preferred to make our intentions plain.

"That sort of freedom is a big luxury in wartime," he said. "We can't afford it."

It was pitch dark by the time my guards and I left the Ministry. The guards were glummer than ever. They have two days leave before reporting back to Diez, and are planning on spending it in Hannover. They had counted on turning me over immediately on arrival and taking an afternoon train. Now they must wait until midnight or after, and since Hannover lies on the R.A.F's "milk run" into north Germany, nobody ever knows what time trains will arrive.

We came out to Zehlendorf West by the suburban commuter's line which starts as a subway and ends on the surface. It was functioning normally and frequently, but at the Potsdamer Platz station I noticed a bulletin listing a half dozen services in northern Berlin which were "temporarily suspended."

We arrived too late for me to get more than a vague idea of the camp, which seems to be a small one. I have a tiny room to myself. There is no fire and a cold wind is whistling in through a broken win-

dow pane. I have only two blankets, both thin and ragged, and will turn in in my clothes.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
OCTOBER 19

HITLER'S decree creating the *Volkssturm*—and a strange heark-back it is to the days when Britain called on volunteers for the Home Guard and armed them with sticks and pikes—makes it as clear as anything could that the best the Nazis hope for today is a compromise peace.

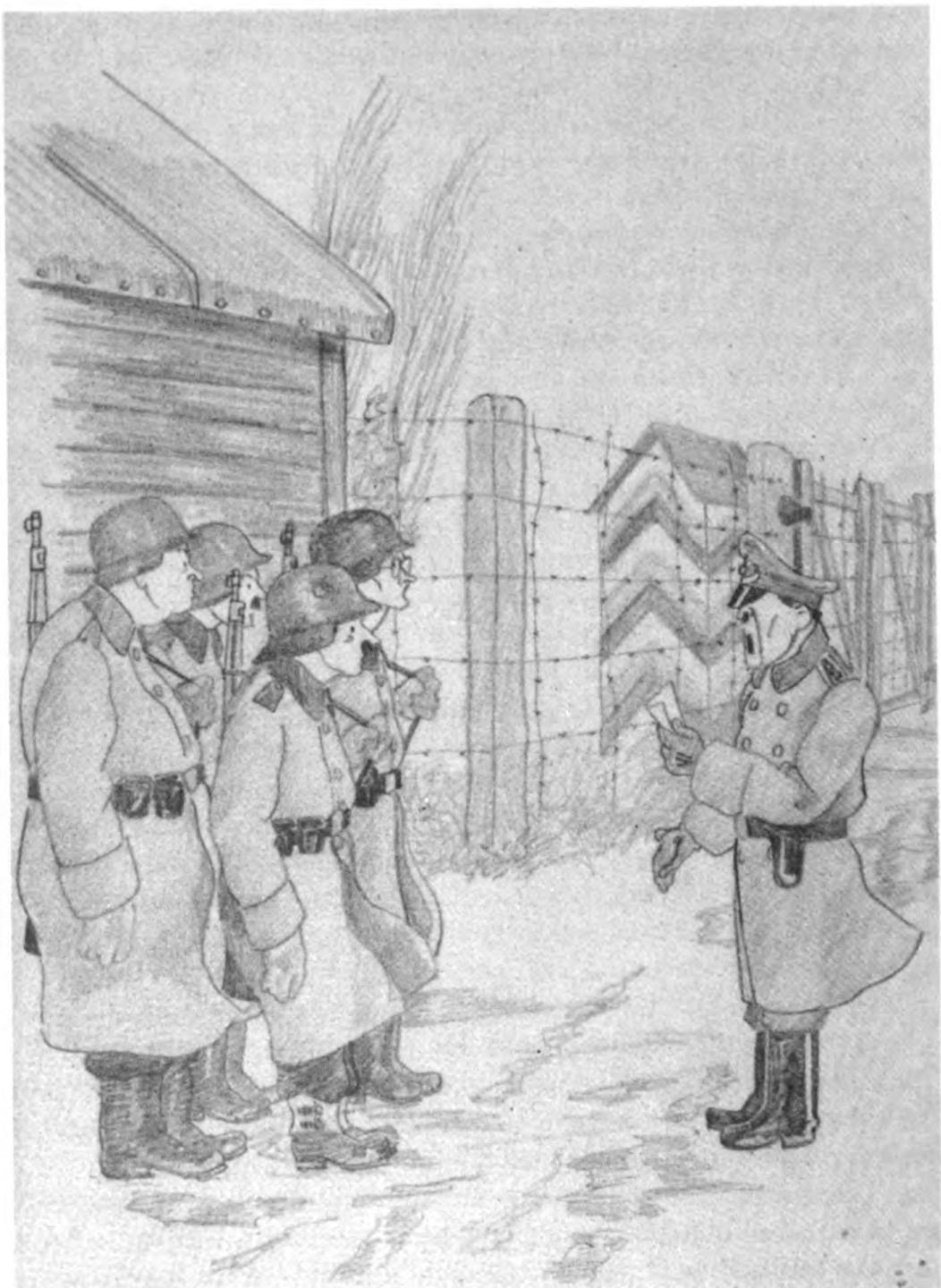
The decree, which was first published in today's morning papers, says textually:

“We must and will succeed, building solely on our own strength as we did from 1939 to 1941, not only in breaking the enemy's determination to destroy us but in hurling them back again and holding them off from the Reich until we have assured the future of Germany and her allies and thereby a peace embracing all Europe.”

There is no more of the bombast in that, of the high-flown promises of total victory, or of the familiar boast that the Reich he built will last a thousand years. Hitler says in that decree just what Suendermann was trying to say yesterday, that at the best Germany can stem the concentric onslaught from east, west and south until her opponents are so war-weary that they are willing to discuss terms. That's quite a come-down for the man who pranced exultantly as he entered the car at Compiegne to dictate defeat to France, who once boasted that the Red Army had been obliterated and who swore that no American soldier would ever set foot in Europe.

The guards in this camp, what little I have seen of them, are proof enough that with the proceeds of the last industrial comb-out all sent into the *Volksgrenadier*—the People's Grenadier—Divisions, there is nothing left to draw on but the fifteen and sixty year-olds who will be asked to man the hedgerows and the barricades.

The guards here are either men over fifty, men with asthma, rheumatism, tuberculosis or critically bad eyesight, men with crippled legs, or men so badly wounded in Russia that they are no longer fit for the front. Half of them are undersized and the other half overstuffed. One of them has a chronic heart condition which has caused him to faint three times on parade. He told me all about himself and his comrades this morning as he gave me my first haircut since capture. Even these men here are periodically examined and weeded out for more active



Camp guardians are a set of elderly gentlemen with cold feet who face their return to military life with a sort of desperate cheerfulness, and most of whom can tell you of their own experiences as prisoners in the last war.

posts. In order to remain in the relatively easy job of prison camp guard, they must be certified by three different sets of doctors.

Their equipment is more evidence of Germany's straits. They have had to give up their German gas masks, and carry French ones. Their rifles include some German models and an assortment of French, Belgian and British. They have several different types of uniform and at least three of them I have seen are wearing the huge coal-scuttle steel helmets of World War I.

Right after lunch, I was taken back into Berlin to von Strempel's apartment just off the fashionable Kurfuerstendamm, heart of the residential west end of the capital. Strempel was an excellent host, providing coffee, cognac and cigars, and even beer for the ancient guard who was accommodated in an adjoining room.

He questioned me in detail about my status, and I explained that correspondents taken at the front were entitled to treatment as officers, and that they were eligible for exchange. He told me, much to my pleasure, that he had succeeded in having my case taken out of the hands of the Propaganda Ministry and put into those of the Foreign Office. He said he had requested the army to authorize an early exchange or even to put me over the Swiss border without waiting for an exchange to be arranged. All this is most encouraging.

Strempel asked me what sort of conditions I had encountered in the camps I had seen to date and I gave him, I hope, a suitably lurid picture of Strasbourg and Limburg. He said he was sorry they had not been better, and predicted I would find Zehlendorf West a big improvement. He also promised that I would shortly be sent to a permanent officers' camp, presumably the big one in Poland where American ground force officers are imprisoned.

Strempel made no attempt whatever to talk politics, and touched on the war only to remark that "the Japs are giving you an awful licking in the naval battles of the west Pacific." (The alleged victories off Formosa and the Philippines are being played to the limit in the local press.) I told him that past experience had taught us almost all Japanese victory communiqües were at least 500 per cent exaggerated, and that often the Domei news agency conjured up victorious battles just to boost morale. Strempel smiled and said:

"I must admit it has occurred to us from time to time that the Japanese win all the victories and you win all the islands."

When I left Strempel's by car, I got a good chance to look at the west end of Berlin. The Kurfuerstendamm was about forty per cent destroyed, chiefly by fire. Landmarks like the Kaiser Wilhelm Memo-

rial Church and the big K.D.W. department store were completely burned out. Two buildings where I had lived, the house of German friends where I had spent scores of evenings, my favorite cafe and the famous *Taverne*, where foreign correspondents used to foregather to drink beer and *Gestapo* agents to eavesdrop, all were destroyed.

There is no elegance left in this quarter, which in peacetime had always managed to rise a bit over Berlin's market-town dullness. There is no style to the shops or the people in the streets, whose life is as drab as the rubble piles among which they pick their way. A fair number of soldiers, sailors and airmen home on leave stroll along the sidewalks, but there is none of the spontaneous good spirits about them which usually marks a man cut loose from discipline for a few days. Only the party officials in their mustardy brown uniforms strut around with the old pomposity.

I was taken out to the *Funkhaus*, Germany's central radio broadcasting headquarters, by one Werner Plack, a very plausible German who once worked in Hollywood. Plack had had a big part in arranging the series of broadcasts which got P. G. Wodehouse into trouble, and remembering what Wodehouse had told me about him in Paris, six weeks ago, I was on my guard.

Plack took no further part in proceedings, however. He sat in a corner while six individuals, all presumably radio propagandists, fired all the usual questions in monotonous succession—why are you Americans fighting over here? why don't you like us, we never hurt you, did we? how can you make an ally out of Russia?

My German is still a bit rusty, and taking to six men at once was quite a strain, but by this time I can handle those questions in my sleep. In fact, I probably do, every night.

I arrived back at camp again after dark, and still have had no chance to examine it. There will, unfortunately, be ample time for that. I can't count on excursions to Berlin every day. In ten minutes it will be nine o'clock, and the lights go out promptly at that time, so it's into bed with the clothes on for a damp, chilly sleep.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
O C T O B E R 2 2

DURING the past three days I have settled myself into this camp and learned my way around. It is such a small lay-out that I already feel completely familiar with it.

The camp compound, which lies alongside the suburban railroad connecting Berlin with Potsdam, is about five miles from Potsdam and seven from the center of the capital. Zehlendorf West, where it is located, is a typical Berlin suburb, with a few apartment buildings, one or two Nazi housing developments, and several hundred two-storey villas for well-to-do businessmen's families. There are two lakes and a considerable amount of forest of the orderly German type which always looks as though it had been manicured each morning before breakfast.

A nice feature of the camp is that the handful of officer prisoners are permitted out in twos and threes for occasional walks under guard. I have been out once for a couple of hours, and got a good chance to look at the surroundings. This southwestern part of Berlin, although it has not been the target of any big raid, has suffered considerable incidental damage. There are big bomb craters in the woods and at least one villa in every five has been demolished to one extent or another. In many cases the damage is confined to shattered roofs or smashed windows and window frames, but I saw a dozen or so which had been completely burned out by incendiaries. Here as in Berlin, the rubble of roof tiles, woodwork, wiring and masonry lies in heaps in the street gutters. It quite obviously has been there for months in most cases, and no attempt is made these days either to cart it away or to repair the damage.

Stalag III-D is a very small camp. It is divided into two *Kommandos*, Number 600 and Number 806. The first of these contains about 300 Russians who are sent out early each morning to work in small groups for local government agencies or for bakers, coal merchants and the like who contract for their labor. They always go under guard, although they are considered relatively "safe" Russians with no particular political convictions.

Kommando 806 is a very special group which lives in a separate compound. At the present moment it consists of eighteen Italian military priests, three Italian officers, a few Frenchmen, about a dozen Russians, officers or N.C.O.'s, who class as convinced Communists, two South African captains, myself, and an individual who shall be called Ponti, and who will one day rate an entry all to himself.

Nobody in *Kommando* 806 knows quite why he is here instead of being in a permanent camp, and nobody can ever get any satisfaction out of the Germans. Some of the other prisoners have been here for several months. Others, like myself, I hope, are here for only a week or two. Apparently there is a considerable turnover. The *kommando* comes under a certain Major Heimpel, who has an office in Berlin.

Heimpel is described as a very plausible individual who speaks several languages almost without accent and who obviously has traveled widely. He seldom appears at the camp, and when he does it is as apt to be in civilian clothes as not. Report has it that he is high up in German counter-espionage.

The best bet seems to be that the people held here in Zehlendorf West are either odd lots whom nobody knows quite how to handle, or individuals being kept handy to Berlin at the disposition of one Nazi agency or another, possibly because they might prove useful to the German cause.

Kommando 806 occupies a small compound consisting of three barracks, each about sixty feet by twenty, a combination office and kitchen, and a combination shower house and latrine. All the buildings are one-storey, of wood with tar paper roofs. They are ten years old or so, and there are many unfortunate cracks through which a cold, damp wind has been whistling since my arrival. The buildings are grouped around a cinder-paved yard about fifty yards by thirty, in the center of which are one small grass plot containing a scrawny sapling, and a sunken concrete basin holding an emergency A.R.P. water supply. Five miserable goldfish swim dejectedly around in the dirty water, watched by four cats who scavenge around the camp for their food.

The buildings are all badly weathered. The trees beyond the barbed wire form a ragged, depressing background. The suburban train rumbles past every four minutes in each direction. And the yard is always, it seems, half covered with great puddles of rainwater. Since the barracks are still unheated, the whole atmosphere is extremely dismal.

Kommando 806, however, is supposed to be a considerable cut above the average in facilities. There are several small rooms in the two barracks now being used, and they are assigned to what officers there are. I have a room ten feet by six containing a two-tiered iron bed with steel springing, a table, two stools and an iron stove. The wooden walls are decorated with an assortment of twelve colored "cheesecake" pictures of German movie actresses, a legacy from the two Italians who were kicked out to make room for me—nobody ever minds inconveniencing the Italians.

The room next to mine is about half again as large. It houses the two South Africans. The Italian priests and the Russians are billeted in two big rooms about twenty by twenty, in the familiar three-decker wooden bunks.

The food, I am told, is on a definitely better standard than in any

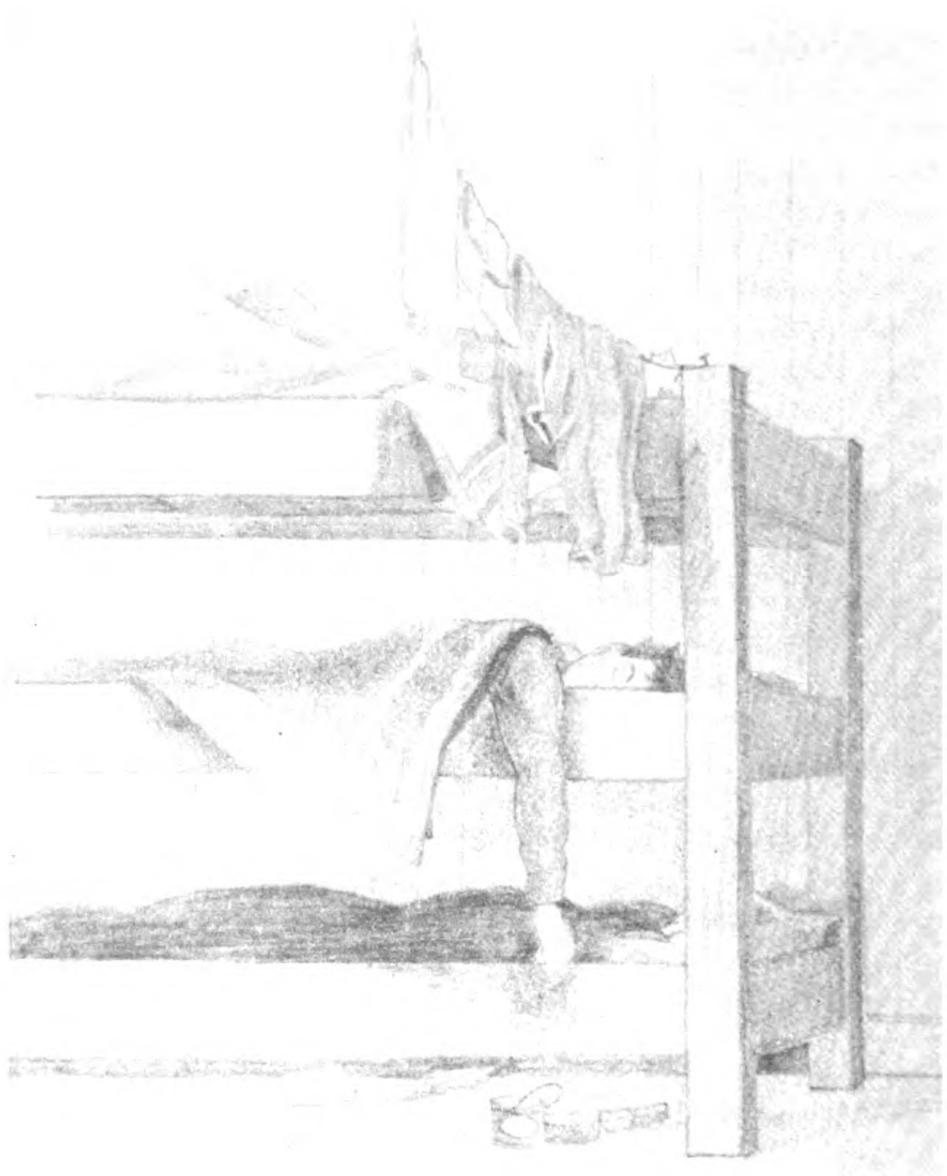
normal camp. We are given the usual *ersatz* coffee morning and evening, but the bread ration amounts to 300 grams a day instead of 200, there is cheese three times a week, artificial jam or honey twice, and the midday meal is pretty well cooked. About half the time it is soup made from cabbage or carrots; the rest of the time it consists of head cheese and fried potatoes, or a meat ball with mashed potatoes, or something on that order. The cook, who lost a couple of fingers on the Russian front, takes care with his cooking, and permits the prisoners to use a corner of the stove to do what cooking they want.

In this camp, prisoners are given a British Red Cross parcel every two weeks. These parcels are lower in food content than the American, but contain certain items like canned bacon, egg powder, cocoa and puddings which are very good. Their chief drawback is that there are only fifty cigarettes. It is hopeless to try to make fifty cigarettes stretch over two weeks, and the heavy smokers either suffer or trade food items for smokes.

One day is just about like another in camp. It starts at about 6:00 A.M., when employers arrive at the outer gate to collect their Russian workers. This involves a huge amount of shouting between the guard at the front gate and the guard at the inner gate, fifty yards away, who gets the Russians into motion. Since both these worthies are elderly and inclined to deafness, it takes nearly an hour to get the labor groups clear of the camp, and by that time everyone else is awake. By 7:00, if you are not too cold under the threadbare blankets, you can drop off to sleep again. A prisoner develops an uncanny ability to sleep at any and all times, and I have managed each morning so far to get in another hour.

At 8:00, coffee is fetched from the kitchen. Normally, the various rooms do this for themselves. The South Africans, however, acquired a batman, and have cut me in on his services. He is a chunky, cheerful Russian naval quartermaster named Nikolai, whose motor torpedo boat was sunk in an action with a German cruiser off the North Cape in Norway. The M.T.B. was American made, and Nikolai, whose German is confined to thirty or forty words and a few dozen vulgar but expressive gestures, looks rapturous when he says "*Motor-Packard-wunderbar.*"

Nikolai, who is one of the "politically unreliable" Russians whom the Germans distrust deeply, apparently appointed himself batmen on the theory that otherwise the Germans would find him harder and more unpleasant work to do. He fetches the food, sweeps out, and does the laundry for us, and within the limitations of his German, acts as



Favorite Sport

newshound and scrounger of oddments like onions and extra cheese. He barters for them with the other Russians or, I suspect, with some of the German guards.

We make our beds after breakfast, and thereafter I have been walking two or three miles around the compound in an attempt to get my circulation going. We wash up in a communal washroom where there is plenty of cold water. On Fridays, a boiler is stoked up, and everyone gets a shower.

At 10:30 or 11:00, one of the South Africans or myself boils up water in the kitchen and we make tea out of their British parcels or coffee from my American. Lunch comes just after noon, the bread and margarine, plus any extras like cheese or jam, are issued about 2:00 P.M., and at 3:00 comes coffee, the last food the Germans supply until next morning. About 5:00, we go to the kitchen to cook up whatever supper we plan. It consists normally of potatoes saved from lunch time plus something from the Red Cross parcel. Faced with the necessity of stretching their parcels over two weeks, prisoners go halves on each other's canned goods.

Except for the two days or so per week on which the Germans permit prisoners to go walking, the time between meals belongs to the individual to use as he sees fit. There are a handful of books, a couple of decks of old playing cards, but nothing else. Conversation would be an obvious answer, but the South Africans are the only other English speakers in camp, and it is bound to be very dull if I'm here for any length of time.

The lights are turned out promptly at 9:00 each evening, and there is nothing to do except sleep. The night is almost never uneventful, however. There has been a Mosquito raid on Berlin each night since my arrival, and on one occasion two of them. Each time the sirens go, everyone must get up, dress, and go out into a series of trenches covered over with railroad ties and earth. There normally is fifteen minutes warning. Then the searchlights off toward Brandenburg begin sweeping the sky, and pass on the incoming raiders to the huge concentration in the Berlin suburbs. The searchlights "cone" one plane after another, and the antiaircraft rumbles from all sides, spangling the sky with bursts, but the tiny silver insects caught at the tips of the cones dart across the blackness of Berlin without seeming to pay any attention. The Mosquito raids, in my experience to date, seem to involve between twenty and fifty planes, each carrying a one-ton blockbuster or an equivalent load of smaller high explosives or incendiaries. The flashes from the bombs light up the northern horizon, where the raids

are concentrating, and the guards, who go into a furor of excitement at the sirens, curse and grumble to each other from the entrances to the shelters. No one Mosquito raid is of much consequence as raids go nowadays, but their cumulative effect is great, and in robbing the entire Reich capital of an hour or two of sleep each night they are rendering a very great service. The Germans allow air raids to disturb them more than anyone I have ever seen. After their experience of the last eighteen months or so, it is hard to criticize them for that. Seeing Berlin and other wrecked cities makes me realize how comparatively mild the old *blitz* raids were, terrible as we thought them at the time.

I have been spending most of my time since arrival here with my two nearest neighbors, who were with the Second South African Division when Rommel broke through and overran Tobruk. They were captured in the famous bastion with the entire division, and have been prisoners nearly two and a half years, first in Italy and, after her collapse, at a big camp near Stuttgart.

The older is Captain William Ringelman, a farmer from Dalton, Natal. Ringelman was in an Italian prison camp south of Florence when Badoglio capitulated to the allies. The Italian commander assured the prisoners that British troops were sweeping up Italy and would soon reach them, and promised that in any event they would not be handed over to the Germans. As a result, only a few prisoners escaped to strike for the allied lines. The remainder waited. On the second morning, they held a thanksgiving service for "liberation." When they emerged from the barrack, the Italian guards had evaporated, and the Germans had arrived. Ringelman was brought here to do translations for a projected weekly newspaper for the South African prisoners. He emphasized to the Germans that he would do nothing but straight translation, and would not lend himself to propaganda, and says that since then the Germans have shown little enthusiasm for using his services.

The second captain is a swarthy Boer named Henrico, a pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church who turned military chaplain when South Africa declared war. Henrico, who is eligible for exchange as a non-combatant, has been trying to get action, he says, ever since Tobruk fell—all of which makes me wonder just how far I'll get. He has been brought here to do a weekly sermon in English and Afrikaans to be printed in the paper.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
OCTOBER 23

HERR GESANDTER SCHMIDT, chief of the Press Division of Ribbentrop's Foreign Office, told me at lunch today that German military policy during this critical period aims frankly at playing for time and a split between Russia and the western powers. Such a split, the Nazis hope, would open the way for the compromise peace which is their only hope.

A good many Germans have talked to me during the last six weeks of their hopes of an "arrangement." To most of them this means an agreement with Great Britain and the United States; to a few of them, there is also the possibility that Himmler, who they say will stop at nothing to save Germany, would try a separate peace with Russia, throwing Germany into the arms of the Kremlin in the hope that eventually she could assert herself and finally become the dominant partner.

That sort of high-flown theorizing is typical of the self-deception which has become second nature to Nazis during twelve years of mass hypnotism. It assumes that Russia would be willing to consider a separate peace—a thing about which informed people in the democracies have had no doubt since Teheran.

Schmidt, whose job is particularly important under the Nazi diplomatic set-up, received Strempel and me for lunch at Ribbentrop's former Berlin residence, a villa in western Berlin. Schmidt explained that Ribbentrop now spends almost all his time at Hitler's Grand Headquarters, and that the villa had been turned over as a club to the neutral correspondents resident in Berlin.

Schmidt is very suave in a bumptious Nazi way. He talks superficially but well on any variety of topics, parading all the stock Nazi arguments with a bland assumption that they are as logical to nonNazis as to himself.

Schmidt conducted us through the club, exhibiting with pride the white marble fireplace "in front of which Ribbentrop first introduced Hitler and von Papen, paving the way for our rise." He took us upstairs where we had an extremely simple wartime lunch with a good bottle of wine. Afterwards, in a private sitting room, he held forth; I could find no other reason for the lunch invitation than a desire to expound.

I give his argument fully partly because it is the most complete

exposition I have yet heard of the Nazi viewpoint, and partly because Schmidt, who has played an increasing part in German foreign policy, is the highest official I am likely to meet while a prisoner. His line of talk follows:

The battle of France was a terrible shock to the Germans, in particular the spectacular American tank advances which turned the defeat into a debacle.

"Either your intelligence was exceptionally good in telling you you could leave your flank wide open, or you showed a strategic dash and brilliance which had been lacking in other campaigns by the western powers," Schmidt said. "You had us open-mouthed."

Coming as they did at the precise moment of the July 20 bomb attempt on Hitler, which shook Germany to its roots, these victories caused a serious crisis, and if the assassination had succeeded, both fronts might well have collapsed and the war would have ended in chaos.

Germany has now managed to stabilize the western front while holding firm from Baltic to Carpathians in the east. During the winter Germany probably will lose ground in Holland and the Balkans, where it is unimportant, but "granted a little luck" can hold Budapest and Vienna and forestall any allied advance on any front before spring. It is granted that Germany has lost much more of her non-German manoeuver area than she ever intended, and that she now faces warfare on her own soil, but she will not be seriously hit before spring, and may be able considerably to improve her position west of the Rhine against allied troops who know nothing of winter warfare.

Meanwhile she will be preparing her spring campaign. The new weapon of retaliation, V-II, which has already been tried out tentatively on England, will be hacking away at London at a quick tempo, along with improved V-I's. Submarines equipped with devices which minimize their danger from air attack will be out in force in the Atlantic, and new weapons, including thousands of jet-propelled fighters (the jet production campaign, Schmidt admitted, had been greatly retarded by bombing) will come into play. Many of these weapons will be purely defensive, designed to retard attack during the coming year.

Germany did not expect to be handicapped by the loss of the entire strategic *Vorfeld*—the buffer areas conquered early in the war—during the period of reserves which, Schmidt said, was always expected to follow the first great offensive surge and to precede the second one. That she lost the *Vorfeld* greatly increases her difficulties, and perhaps she can never hope today to beat allied land and airpower massed on the west-

ern front. The Russians, however are even more overstrained than Germany, and when spring comes one full-scale Germany offensive may well burst through their thin front into the weak rear areas, rolling up the Red Army and winning Germany a big enough victory to produce a general stand-off.

Meanwhile there are various political possibilities. While defending herself bitterly on all fronts, "because every German knows nothing could be worse for us than surrender now on your terms," Germany will carefully watch the political winds. She sees no momentary possibility for compromise with Britain and the United States, even if Roosevelt is defeated in November. Both nations have been committed by their leaders to unconditional surrender and the destruction of Germany, which would inevitably mean "Bolshevik chaos" in Europe. But Germany would like an "honorable peace" with the west, and if she sees the slightest chance of it, she will go for it with every argument she knows.

Meanwhile Russia is pursuing Stalin's imperialistic program with complete ruthlessness, and Churchill has failed completely to stem her in his trip to Moscow just ended, except insofar as he preserved the Dardanelles for a few months by abandoning Hungary to the Russian sphere of influence. (The break with Russia in 1941, Schmidt said, came largely because Germany was too "honest" to grant the demands in the Baltic and Balkans presented by Molotov during his single trip to Berlin.) Russia is playing an outwardly "correct" game in Finland because she sees a chance to dominate Scandinavia by deception. But in the long run she intends to clamp a "Bolshevik claw" around Europe from Gibraltar to the Skagerrack, putting western civilization at her mercy.

It is hoped that the British and American publics will realize what direction Russian policy is taking, and that a split will occur in the allied front. If not, Germany is perfectly capable of negotiating an alliance with Russia, dangerous and impermanent as that might be, "because a drowning man does not read the name painted on the life preserver somebody throws him."

I told Schmidt I thought it was foolish for anyone to hope for a split in the allied front as far as the single paramount question of beating Germany was concerned, and that differences over problems like Poland would not affect the determination to smash National Socialism. He replied that Russia had double-crossed both Poles and British in the matter of the recent Warsaw uprising by promising aid and then seeing to it that the Poles were left to fight the Germans alone. He said

Stalin was quite capable of double-crossing Britain and the United States in the future, even to the extent of negotiating a separate peace with Germany.

"You western people just don't know the Russians," he said. "We didn't know them either until we had to fight them. Now we know we are Europe's only hope, and that means the world's."

Schmidt assured me that I would be sent to an officers' camp within the next few days, and that I would be exchanged as soon as possible. With that in mind, I suppose the lunch was arranged to float a little "scare propaganda" of casualties to come and of the threat of a German-Russian alliance. There are too many fallacies in the reasoning for it to impress me very much.

After leaving the Ribbentrop villa I was sent for "tea" to the apartment of Manfred Zapp, a mild-looking little man who is head of the *Transocean News Agency*, which handles German propaganda in neutral countries. Zapp, who was arrested in Washington as a German agent before Pearl Harbour, and finally expelled from the country, explained he was a "historical philosopher" interested in exchanging ideas. I never discovered the true reason for the meeting because the R.A.F. chose that moment to stage an early raid, and we spent the next hour in a trench shelter in the garden which was full of *hausfrauen* with their valuables, and where conversation was impossible.

The guard took me off to camp immediately thereafter.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
OCTOBER 25

LIFE is becoming pretty routinized here in camp, and since I expect to leave soon and to have little more chance to see Berlin, I'm trying to make the most of it. I have been out twice for walks in the Grunewald forest, between Berlin and Potsdam, and have succeeded in covering pretty well the western suburbs. If I can get into town two or three times more, I should manage to cover most of the important quarters.

The walks are taken under guard, one guard if you're alone and two guards if you go in threes. Prisoners are never permitted out more than three at a time, except for the eighteen Italian chaplains, who are let out unguarded and who seem to spend most of their afternoons trying to supplement the prison diet by doing a grand tour of the few restaurants which are open.

The guards, being middle-aged, are pretty mild-mannered, and they

are perfectly willing to talk once they get clear of camp. One of them has already promised that when we get the chance, we'll take in Berlin in sections. He and I were in a *Kneipe*, a typical Berlin pub, the other afternoon, and after discovering that a tiny glass of ordinary *schnapps* would cost seven marks, or \$2.80 at the prewar official rate, compromised on very bad, watery wartime beer. We also have stopped once or twice at little drink stands in the woods, and either the local Germans have seen so many German and foreign uniforms that they don't recognize me for a prisoner or they just don't care very much. They're always willing to chat about their problems.

Schmidt said two days ago in support of his premise that Germany would go Communist if defeated, that the entire nation had moved strongly to the left during the war. He argued that the tremendous personal sacrifices demanded of the people by the government, plus the destruction of private property by allied air raids, had inevitably reduced the whole population to the same low level of subsistence. He said nobody nowadays has any private property of consequence, that everyone is reduced to living in what he has on his back, that enforced savings have deprived even the well-paid of purchasing power, and that nobody can get more than his ration card provides. In the badly bombed urban areas, he said, great masses of people have been reduced to communal feeding and communal sleeping for periods which often last weeks at a time. Tens of thousands of families are now living permanently with friends, and hundreds of thousands of people have been evacuated to safe areas where they are cared for *en masse* in government relief centers.

Schmidt said that the Nazis had developed a finely-balanced system of ration distribution which, by dint of rigid control, had just managed to keep abreast of the ration requirements. He said everyone could always be sure of getting what his handful of point cards called for, and that this in itself was a big factor in keeping the people solid behind Hitler. He argued that in the event of an allied occupation, the entire food system would be thrown off balance as it has been in the liberated countries, and that the result would be chaotic.

"You have already killed all hope of a German revival in event of allied victory," he said, "and we admittedly have propagandized this danger to the limit. Communism feeds on the death of hopes. And a man who has been communized by war is going to take very radical steps indeed to get food and heat, when he sees his wife and children freezing and starving before his eyes."

I had known enough about Germany before my capture, and have

talked enough to Germans since, to realize that Schmidt was lying in his details. The Germans can't get everything their ration cards provide for. There are constant shortages of meat, fowl, fish, vegetables and often of vital fats. For what they get, they queue up hours at a time, and sometimes the supply is exhausted with the queue still a block long.

They do not live on equal existence. Party officials have big cars where the mass of the population waits dully for standing room on the subway or the infrequent buses and streetcars. Party officials eat well, comparatively speaking. And the favored upper crust has plenty of money to trade in the black market, where a pound of coffee costs 600 to 700 marks—\$240 to \$280—and a single cigarette can cost up to two dollars.

The party sleeps out the siren-ridden nights in deep bomb-proof shelters while the rest of the population shivers in cellars or covered trenches where a direct hit means annihilation. The people are well aware of all this, and they resent it.

There is considerable truth in what Schmidt said, nonetheless. The people look remarkably well dressed. Their clothes are warm and, for wartime, neat. But few of them have more than one warm outfit, and the quality is very bad in most cases. Their lives have become so restricted by rationing, regulation, and destruction that there is little left for anyone to do beyond work, feed and sleep. Amusements are limited to a few movies and theaters and a skimpy sports program. Travel is out of the question: in England, the public is asked not to travel, but in Germany there are inspectors on all long distance trains to see that each traveler has the necessary permit and can show good reason for the trip.

There is no chance to eke out home-cooked diets with occasional good meals in the restaurants. German eating places, whose menus once looked like catalogues, now serve a few badly cooked, parsimoniously served items, none of which can be gotten without ration points except gruel, thin soup or vegetable stew. The old beer hall life has vanished, partly because of the restrictions on entertainment, and partly because the beer is not worth drinking. Anyone who insists on celebrating pays a staggering price. Two of the guards spent their forty-eight-hour leave drinking, last week-end, and made the mistake of inviting a few friends to help them. It cost them 3,000 marks—\$1,200. They say the money was as well spent that way as it would have been any other.

The stores have skimpy stocks on display, but in one department

store I managed to walk through yesterday, about the only items whose sale was not controlled were bathroom tiles. Everything, from shoes to overcoats and from stationery to bedroom suites, is hard to get, tasteless, and shoddy.

Because nothing can be bought, barter has become a major factor in human existence. The papers are full of offers to exchange a radio for a suit of clothes, a piano for a motorcycle, a fur coat for a sewing machine.

These factors certainly have had their effect on the solid, middle-class pride which once so distinguished Germany. The Nazis by 1939 had already badly weakened the middle class; the war may have completed its destruction. Perhaps that accounts for the strangest of all paradoxes in this country: that despite the hatred of Communism which every agency of propaganda systematically inflames, the average German shrugs his shoulders weakly and says in dumb resignation, "of course we will go Communist if we lose."

I asked Schmidt how a nation determined to fight to the last man against "Bolshevism" could accept "bolshevization" as the inevitable result of defeat.

"It's your fault," he said. "You may be sorry one day that you didn't help us."

There's no logic in it at all, but there it is.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
OCTOBER 26

AFTER freezing for three days and protesting mightily against the temperature of the barracks, we finally got six pressed-coal briquets per room this afternoon. Six briquets are about enough to heat one of the cast-iron or tile stoves for a couple of hours, and none of the stoves is adequate for the size of the room. Nonetheless, six briquets is the daily ration from now on, regardless of the size of the room or the number of prisoners in it. Ringelman, Henrico and I have decided to leave my room cold and to pool all our fuel to heat theirs, where I spend most of my waking time anyway. We shudder at the thought of these barracks in real cold weather.

I have been trying since my arrival here to get warm clothes before the real winter begins. My underwear is in rags, both pairs of socks are shot through with holes, my boot soles are paper thin, and I have no overcoat or gloves. I want another pair of boots, some warm socks,

underwear, shirts and gloves, and a winter coat and sweater. To date I have managed to get one pair of woolen socks, which Major Heimpel designed to send out from Berlin after getting a long written wail couched in my most dignified German. Whenever I ask again for the other items, I am told that it will be very difficult, what with bombing and all the other difficulties.

Allied bombing is blamed for everything in Germany, and while it undoubtedly is responsible for a lot, it has become a bogey second only to Communism. The average German has become so accustomed to laying all ills to bombing that twenty-five years hence, if you complain to him about the weather, he will probably retort accusingly:

"What can you expect, when you bomb our homes and our families?"

Today I was given twenty marks advance on the money I had gotten from Bob Jennings, which the Germans reluctantly agreed to cash when I produced it out of my knapsack. I promptly invested one mark, forty pfennigs in seven bottles of beer, then just as promptly lost the twenty mark bill before I could pay up. It's the first time in years that I've lost money out of my pocket. It would have to happen when twenty marks looks like a fortune.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
OCTOBER 27

IT IS a cold day, with low, damp cloud and an east wind. We tried our best to keep warm by moving, but gave up at lunch time and went back to bed. We have decided that there's too little fuel to heat the room before late afternoon, and the food is so inadequate that none of us has the resistance to stand cold. We have asked for sacking or newspaper to stuff the two to three-inch cracks at top and bottom of the wooden partitions, through which a constant draft blows, but are told neither is available.

There was a thorough search of the Russian quarters this afternoon, and the Germans emerged with great armloads of confiscated things, chiefly edibles smuggled in from outside. They included everything from potatoes to foreign canned goods. How the Russians get them in is a mystery to the Germans. When each work group reaches the gate in the late afternoon, a thorough search is made. The Russians invariably return with a big assortment of stolen and bartered articles concealed in their ragtag uniforms. It includes bits of wood to burn, chunks of coal, pieces of wire, onions, potatoes, turnips, old clothing,



anything which might help improve the miserable existence they lead. The Germans take it all. Sometimes, if the *Feldwebel* on duty is in a good humor, they are allowed to keep the firewood and any food which is already cooked, but invariably the uncooked food goes to the communal kitchen.

With millions of foreign workers constituting a terrible threat to internal order, the Germans are becoming more and more jittery about prison breaks, and a food stock is the great essential to anyone planning an escape. Under a new order, prisoners who get Red Cross packages—the Russians, of course, get none—must leave them at the camp office and draw out at any one time only what they intend to consume that day. All cans must be opened in the presence of the Germans. The only items which may be taken out in bulk are milk, sugar, margarine, coffee and tea.

The barracks are posted with bulletins on escape. One of these informs prisoners that "Escape Is No Longer a Sport" and warns them that Germany now has undefined "death zones" where any unauthorized person will be shot out of hand. Another tries to enlist Italian military internees to inform against escaped prisoners or allied airmen forced to parachute into country districts of Germany. The chances of cooperation from the Italians would seem to be remote. All with whom I have talked, from the doctor at Strasbourg to the priests here at Zehlendorf, hate the Germans as wholeheartedly as do the British, the Americans or the Russians.

The Germans obviously fear what will happen if things once start to crack and the foreign slave labor once sees a chance to retaliate. Foreign workers now must live in barracks in the cities and be off the streets by 8:00 P.M., whereas formerly they were permitted great freedom of circulation. Men whose feelings are suspect are being put back into camps. There is an Italian colonel in the next building who worked for the *Deutscher Verlag*, the big Nazi publishing house, from his internment until a short time ago; now he is a prisoner like the rest, and can see his German fiancee only by waving as she passes on the suburban train or by cuddling on the steps of the guard house Sunday afternoons, when she may visit him. He had made the mistake of saying what he thought about Mussolini, so he became "politically unreliable."

At the same time, manpower difficulties are becoming so serious that the Germans use every ounce of persuasion on all prisoners except British and Americans to "turn civilian" and go out to work in arms factories. Where persuasion fails, the Germans often send the man

anyway. The Italians all fear "turning civilian" because they know what the world thinks of Italy and hope that by remaining prisoner they can establish personal good faith.

The papers, which we see spasmodically here, are filled today with a very gory selection of atrocity stories about Nemmersdorf, East Prussia, where the Russian occupying troops allegedly killed twenty-six civilians, raped many women, and burned and plundered the entire village. It is asserted that sixty-one victims in all have been found in a series of farm communities, and that discovery of more is expected. More and more, this sort of propaganda is being carried over to the British and American forces, which the population is suspected of not hating enough. The reading public is told today that there's little difference between Russians and "air gangsters," and that Communism is rampant throughout western Europe. De Gaulle, it is said, cannot cope with red elements, reinforced by Spanish Civil War internees, who are terrorizing southern France; there are food riots in Paris; Belgium is prostrate and starving; unrest is everywhere, and the people long for the return of upright German rule.

The only news which can compete to any extent with the horror stories is the dogged effort of German correspondents in Tokyo to make the far eastern campaign look like an axis victory. All the Japanese effusions are reprinted with a sort of defiant exuberance, but inserted here and there are a few amazingly frank Jap admissions. Today, for instance, there are a series of stories proving that American naval losses off Formosa and the Philippines are catastrophic: it is quite obvious that whatever forces Admiral Nimitz may have left are retreating, if at all, by rowboat. At the same time, three American divisions landed in the Philippines are driving ahead everywhere, and although they "face annihilation," the strength of the reinforcements they are receiving is a source of concern.

The result of all this is complete confusion. If the guards are any criterion, the average German, who doesn't like Japs and never did like them, figures they probably are getting the same sort of licking the Germans took all summer.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
OCTOBER 28

READING is a serious problem here. The camp library includes about fifteen books, all either in German or English, which cuts out all prisoners except three of us. The others are not missing much. The

selection consists of three laboredly funny volumes about, respectively, Vienna, Berlin and Hamburg, two books on air and panzer warfare, a half dozen bad romances and three American westerns of the real "horse opera" variety.

Outside of these works, our sole reading matter is the German papers. The Berlin press, except for an occasional issue of the official *Voelkischer Beobachter*, is limited to four pages, and these contain so little news that it's a miracle they sell at all. Sometimes as much as one-eighth of each issue is devoted to death notices. The High Command communique, which most readers get from the radio anyway, disposes of another eighth. A third eighth goes to a continued story and another to the barter advertisements and the like. The remainder of each edition is left for the horror stories about Russian "sub-humans," the crimes of the "air gangsters," the sins of international Jewry, and the epic heroism of all Germans. No German ever dies except with the name of the Fuehrer on his lips. No unit goes into battle except with a "joy in sacrifice" which the German front correspondents admit they find it impossible to describe. As one of the profession, I can well understand it.

The great majority of the stories have no contact whatever with facts. It's apparently sufficient to get the quota of party cliches into the copy. When news is too unpleasant, as most of it is nowadays, it is often ignored. On October 24, the *Nachtausgabe*, a popular Berlin evening paper, carried a story on the last hours of Aachen whose superlatives would have made Siegfried blush. Its competitor, *Der Angriff*, which was founded by Doktor Goebbels and has been in a state of high hysteria ever since, preferred to ignore the loss of the city and devoted the same space to a paean on how the East Prussian *Volksturm* could not even wait to be mobilized but had rushed to arms and repelled the Russians, division after crack division.

The German reading public, judged by the comments I have heard in and out of camp, concedes that the news in the paper is tripe. But the German public has been so well trained that it also believes just about every word it reads.

There are two papers for prisoners, "The Camp," which is for the British, and "O.K." which caters to the Americans. They contain little obvious propaganda beyond columns which they head ". . . says Germany" and "The German Point of View," but the news content is dull and badly selected and the sports items so antique it is hard even for a prisoner to drum up interest. The best features of each are the contributions, drawn or written, of the prisoners themselves.

Today I got hold of the October twenty-sixth issue of *Der Stuermer*, organ of the famous Jew-baiter Julius Streicher, of Nuremberg. This, like everything else, has shrunk to four pages, but is otherwise its old, juicy self. The word *Jud*, or Jew, appears 220 times in one form or another, entirely aside from the various other nouns and adjectives used to designate the hated race. The lead story, based on a statement attributed to the *Jewish Chronicle* of London, deals with antisemitism in the American army officers' corps, and concludes regretfully with the observation that the whole face of the world would change if America, last stronghold of the race which started the war, would only turn against the Jews. *Der Stuermer*, which is nothing if not consistent, is still of the opinion that Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Queen Wilhelmina, King Haakon and about twenty others, are "slaves of the Jews," that America is "Jew-ridden," and that Zionism is behind everything, including America's dislike of Emperor Hirohito.

It has rained all day, but fortunately we warmed ourselves thoroughly during the weekly shower bath, and were thawed enough thereafter to avoid going back to bed.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
O C T O B E R 29

CLEAR and cold it was all day today, and I kept warm by walking about six miles, part of it in the compound and the remainder in the woods outside camp. The walk unfortunately was all woods and no city streets, which meant there was nothing much of interest to see, but it's a great relief to be able to go in one direction for more than 150 feet.

Ponti, the camp guttersnipe, was caught burning bed boards last night, and has been threatened with four weeks in a punishment company, which means solitary confinement. Bed boards are the great issue here that they are in all camps, and German necks swell with righteous rage at the slightest sign of "sabotage" in this department. Everyone burns them, but most of us are a little more careful than Ponti. If the punishment had been handed out to anyone else, he would have had the sympathy of the entire camp; since it's Ponti, the whole camp is delighted. This is as good a time as any other to describe the gentleman in question.

Ponti, who will be twenty-two this fall, is a true product of the Mediterranean, a sun-browned goulash who rejoices in a British passport and who therefore, much to the chagrin of the Germans with their

"pure race" ideas, is entitled to decent treatment and not what is usually kept for "inferior" peoples. He says his mother was French and his father Greek. The general consensus around camp is that his blood strain includes Jewish, Syrian or some other near eastern touch, plus Greek, Maltese and a hint of North Africa.

Ponti acquired his British passport by accident of birth in Malta, although on occasion he has claimed Cyprus instead. This is a source of considerable chagrin to the occasional Britishers who pass through Stalag III-D, and who find it exceedingly difficult to snoot the Germans, as all good Britishers and Americans do, with Ponti in the offing.

Ponti's contact with the British Empire seems to have stopped at an early age, at which point his family transferred activities to Paris. There he grew up, learned to slick down his long, curly hair, and acquired an astonishing command of Parisian guttersnipe French, which makes the fruitiest cockney or Bowery sound like Sunday School stuff.

The Germans were in full occupation of Paris when Ponti reached eighteen, and he was promptly clapped into civilian internment camp. Just what caused his removal to this military camp is a mystery. The Germans say he volunteered for the SS, that the SS took a look at him and said the manpower shortage had not yet become that acute, and that Ponti, when offered the chance to fight for the Fuehrer by swinging a shovel in the Todt organization, had shuddered and decided to remain a prisoner. At any rate, here he is, and all the efforts of the German camp authorities to send him elsewhere have been frustrated by the commandants of other camps, who must have investigated him first.

Ponti wears a combination of military and civilian clothes, featuring sandals or shoes with virtually no soles, striped morning pants, and a rakish forage cap with the insignia of the Lincolnshire regiment, with which Ponti says he fought at Dunkirk. Ponti's experiences at Dunkirk, which were nothing short of phenomenal, included a rare moment during which he took time off from the struggle in the dunes to wave at his brother, a "captain" in the R.A.F., who chanced to fly by overhead.

From time to time Ponti has been entrusted with such compound responsibilities as cleaning the latrine, but his attitude has been that which marked his reception of the Todt organization offer, and for the most part he is a man of leisure. Leisure for Ponti means the opportunity for business.

Ponti gets a Red Cross parcel whenever we do (except during the periods when he is being punished). He promptly begins trading with

the Italian chaplains, who get no parcels but who do have thousands of bad *Nationali* cigarettes sent them from Italy. Ponti disposes of his entire package in trades, and thus is able to smoke most of the time. When his parcel is exhausted, he wangles trades between the Russians and the Italians. And when those possibilities grow slim, he trades his clothes. The Germans say he will get no new ones until the war ends, because the new ones inevitably turn up next day in the Russian compound or the Italian barrack.

Without doubt Ponti's masterpiece came three or four days ago, when he traded to the *Feldwebel* who runs the kitchen, and who is in the market for chocolate, tea or coffee, what purported to be a two-ounce package of British Red Cross tea. The *Feldwebel*, who considered fifty cigarettes a cheap price to pay for the prize, discovered on closer examination that only the top layer was tea. The rest was old newspaper.

Ponti, whose command of the English language is limited for all practical purposes to a half dozen four-letter words, greets each arriving Britisher with, "Me British too, how many cigarettes you bring?" —thus putting things on a firm, friendly, blood-brother basis—and when he gets the inevitable kick in the pants, takes the first opportunity to go through the new arrival's baggage. He is always discovered in the act or very shortly thereafter, and readily admits he's a cad and a rotter.

Ponti might be forgiven all this, because kriegies are very forbearing people, if it were not for the fact that his command of the Italian language includes about two-thirds the words of "O Sole Mio." Ponti, an early riser, starts singing "O Sole Mio" at approximately 7:00 A.M., and stops only during the brief periods when he is investigating somebody's possessions and prefers not to advertise himself. He sings "O Sole Mio" with great feeling—with the sort of throb which no doubt would sound wonderful on the Grand Canal. In Stalag III-D, gem of Zehlendorf, it is awful.

Nobody, Germans included, knows quite what to do about Ponti. A suggestion, made with the full knowledge and approval of the Germans, that he be thrown into the static water tank and held under, has not yet been acted on.

I have spent so much time on Ponti partly because there is nothing else to do, and partly because he is the weirdest character in a camp which has unusual characteristics in great plenty. Probably next in line come the Italian priests.

These unfortunates, who include one Monsignore, were picked up for the most part in the Balkans when the Italians changed sides and



"Me British, too, how many cigarettes you bring?"

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the Germans disarmed their Army. They were asked to declare for Mussolini, refused flatly, and since then have been treated with extreme indifference. For a long time they were in camp near Lublin, Poland, where the food was so miserable that they had hardly the strength to walk around. Since their transfer here, they have been better treated, but they are under a ban which is enough to drive any conscientious priest mad. Despite the fact that there are thousands of Italian prisoners near Berlin without any religious care of any sort, these eighteen priests are kept here and forbidden to exercise any function beyond the giving of one sacrament, Extreme Unction. Two of them are permitted to visit hospitals, but they have no other contact with Italian prisoners.

As a result, they despise the Germans more thoroughly than the rest of us possibly could. But at the same time they have kept their good humor, and undoubtedly have a better time among themselves than anyone else in camp.

One of their chief sources of humor is the morning mass. Since they have no congregation, this is celebrated in a sort of common ceremony. The nine seniors sing mass in unison, with their juniors acting as acolytes. Then the juniors sing mass, with the seniors assisting. This shift is known in camp as "sending in the second team," and even the priests refer to it as that.

They are extremely intelligent and cultured men. What they have seen of this war has impressed them deeply with Hitler's huge crime against humanity. They are very sensitive to the reputation Italians have with other prisoners, and hope only that their nation will be given the chance to rehabilitate itself.

Because they can circulate more or less as they will in Berlin, they are an extremely good source of news. This camp is too small to have the secret radios and other gear of the big, permanent camps, but with what the priests and the Russians manage to collect, the prisoners know considerably more than the guards.

The Italian colonel who cuddles with his fiancee each Sunday afternoon on the guardhouse steps is a would-be distiller. To date, his experiments have not gotten beyond the fermentation stage. He has a dozen bottles of German beer behind his stove, each spiked with raisins, sugar and yeast smuggled in by the girl friend. One bottle blew up last night and the colonel hurriedly decided to un-stopper the others before he blasted the whole camp. He is still hopeful of ultimate success, but the rest of us, after smelling the interior of his room, are not so sure anything good can come of the great experiment.

The colonel shares a room with another colonel who divides his time between washing small bits of laundry and cutting his available bread and food into the smallest possible pieces, consuming them in nibbles as he cuts; and an elderly major who sits for hours on end at the table, laboriously tracing illustrations out of magazines and packing them away as gifts for his little granddaughter in Italy.

Nikolai and his Russian room-mates, all being "politically unreliable" prisoners, are not permitted out of camp. They have a few odd jobs around the compound, but spend most of their time making model airplanes, stealing food from the Germans, arguing politics, and playing checkers and poker. When Nikolai wins at poker, he buys beer by the keg and treats everyone in sight. Until recently, there was a watchmaker among the Russians. He was so good that the Germans started giving him their clocks and watches to be repaired, and they arranged for him to get the necessary tools and spare parts. Finally they told him arbitrarily he was to go into the German army as a "volunteer," and ordered him to be packed up by next morning. They found his body hanging from a pipe in the shower room. Before committing suicide, he had hidden thirty-seven watches from his "clients" so successfully that they haven't been found yet.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
OCTOBER 30

CAPTAIN HENRICO was suddenly sent off today on about an hour's notice to some other camp. He was given no explanation. When he staggered out the gate under a mountain of baggage, he hoped he was going to be allowed to act as pastor to a South African camp.

Henrico, having given up hope of repatriation under the Geneva Convention, which provides that chaplains, medical personnel—and correspondents—shall be treated as protected personnel, had been trying for a long time, he says, to persuade the Germans to send him to some camp where South African enlisted men were held, so that he could exercise his normal functions. Outside of a brief spell at the British naval camp near Bremen, where he had acted as chaplain, he had never been given a chance.

The amount of stuff Henrico took with him made me realize what a forlorn figure a new prisoner is. He had many changes of shirts and underwear and socks, two complete uniforms, extra blankets, sweaters, shoes, even a lot of souvenirs. When he left, he had two suitcases, one



Old Prisoner—Old Style

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of them a wooden affair made by a Russian in camp, a blanket roll, a haversack, a box of books, and a bundle composed of two Red Cross parcels full of odds and ends like shoe brushes, soap and food. I still have only my musette bag, and I'm just that much better than the ordinary new kriegie.

I inherited Henrico's bed in the room with Ringelman, and the Germans haven't thought yet to come and collect his blankets. With them and a couple more filched here and there when nobody was looking, I now have seven. None of them is good enough to line a dog's basket back home, and none is long enough to keep a midget's toes warm, but by a complicated stagger system of folding which I worked out this afternoon, I'm warm tonight for the first time since I reached Berlin.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
OCTOBER 31

THIS is windfall day for fair. Being completely out of tobacco, I suddenly got fifty cigarettes from the Germans, representing the amount a prisoner is permitted to purchase each month. They are a French brand known as *Elegantes*, and by any other standard would be terrible, but they taste wonderful here. This noon, I was told I would get winter clothes tomorrow. This afternoon, I got fifty marks, representing part of the credit on the 2,500 francs I got from Bob Jennings. There is seventy-five marks more to my account, and I am rolling in wealth. Beer, razor blades and matches, and not very much of any of them, is all we can buy around here, so the money will go a long way.

The sudden deluge of good luck was too much for me, and I went whole hog for dinner and consumed the entire can of powdered eggs from my British Red Cross parcel. The can is the equivalent of five eggs, and I feel sleepy and very full.

It's amazing what a difference small things make in this sort of existence. If you have no cigarettes, you bite everyone's head off, and you dribble so shamelessly at the people who have them that they finally pass you one. You accept even though you know they'll be out of them in a day or so. If you have no food left in the Red Cross parcel, you sulk and pity yourself. If you get either food or tobacco, or if you manage to steal a couple of lumps of coal or a tin can which looks useful, your spirits promptly rise. You will spend an hour or more, as I did today, scraping the dirt from an old pack of cards, or devote two hours to concocting some sort of meal which will take roughly three

minutes to wolf down. I never imagined that I could darn socks until it became a matter of absolute necessity. I find I can. It takes hours to do a decent job on the two well-holed pairs which are all I own, but nobody minds spending a day on any small job. It makes the time pass.

I have been hoping to get some drawing materials, so that I can fill in the time with sketching. I have a few sketches made on odd bits of paper, but I need smooth paper, pencils, and india ink and pens. Strempel gave me money to cover the cost, but the guard who promised to get them came back with only two pencils, an eraser and some very shoddy paper which is not much good for pencil sketches and would never take ink without blotting. Still, it's better than nothing.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 1

I BECAME a walking rummage sale today as a result of my visit to the clothing depot at *Spittelmarkt*, deep in downtown Berlin, where I was issued with winter "uniform." The depot, run by a lot of French prisoners with two surly German non-coms in charge, was the sorriest thing of its kind I ever have run across.

It contains no complete uniform of any nation, and nothing American whatever. The "customers" just take what they can get, and hope it comes reasonably close to a fit. The Germans are supposed to draw equipment for allied kriegies from shipments sent in by the nations concerned, and to supply prisoners with adequate uniform items whenever they need them. When I protested at the stuff handed me, one of the Germans remarked, "stop your bombing and maybe you'll get some clothes."

Supplies were so short that the Germans had a notice posted announcing that for each 100 prisoners in the camps which draw from this depot, no more than fifty shirts, twenty-three pairs of gloves, eighteen overcoats, thirty-six pairs of pants, sixty wooden shoes and 200 pairs of foot cloths in lieu of socks will be issued this winter. What happens to the less fortunate kriegies who happen to run short late in the winter, doesn't seem to worry the methodical German mind.

I finally emerged from the depot with: a pair of Danish trousers, a British battledress jacket a size too small, a third or fourth hand British overcoat several of whose buttons had been replaced with Jugoslav and Belgian, a pair of brown woolen gloves of unidentified origin, a shoddy German sweater, two French handkerchiefs, two suits of long winter

underwear made of very bad cotton material which tie around the ankles and which are called "Russian" underdrawers because generally speaking they are too bad for issue to anyone else. I could have had a Danish cap, but fortunately still have my American. There were no shirts, no pyjamas, and no socks. The Germans offered me foot cloths of light flannel made to wrap around the foot instead of socks, but I told them that since the allied governments furnish them with wool socks by the tens of thousands, I saw no reason to wear this mediaeval number. I could also have had wooden sabots of the familiar Dutch Boy type, but told them I wasn't interested.

The hodge-podge is pretty terrible, but one item at least deserves perpetuation. This is the Danish trousers. They are made of fine English wool, more or less the color of British battledress, and they clearly were constructed for a man of such proportions that a sight of him alone would terrify a whole division.

I stand six feet two, and my legs are the longest part of me. The trousers are now in hands of a Russian tailor in the next compound, to have five full inches sawed off the bottoms. My waistline, thanks to years of soft living before the war, could be described as ample (although it is getting less so fast). The trousers are being taken in three inches at a minimum. I say at a minimum because these trousers, *mirabile dictu*, are the only confection it has ever been my luck to run across which have two separate and distinct sets of fly buttons. The two rows start at a common point at the crotch and diverge from there to the top hook-and-eye arrangements, which are a good three inches apart. Even with the three inch cut in the waist band, I am using the outer row, giving the most overlap. What will happen if the old waistline continues to shrink I am not yet prepared to forecast.

The trousers have been a great topic of discussion all afternoon. There are two schools of thought, one of which maintains that the Danish army obviously planned against an average reduction of three inches in the girth of its recruits, once they began training. The other school holds to the comfortable feeling that Denmark, where people have always have eaten better and more than in any other country in Europe, expects its recruits to gain three inches in the waistline once they hit free army chow lines. The two schools are agreed, in any event, that the Danish army was a very foresighted organization, and that it was some man for whom this gargantuan garment was originally engineered.

The trip to the Spittelmarkt did serve to open up a new area of Berlin, as far as I was concerned. The damage throughout the quarter,

which was an important cheap-price shopping section, sticks close to the sixty per cent level which seems to apply generally to the entire city, barring the suburbs. I had always thought London very down-at-the-heel after five war years, very much in need of a dose of soap and water and of millions of gallons of house paint. Berlin is five times as bad, and with every wind which raises the dust from the dismal rubble piles in the streets, it becomes one degree worse. Except for the subways and the suburban railroad, which always were neat and efficient, Berlin no longer resembles a modern city in any of its functions. Its people may be staunch in support of the war effort, but as you see them in the streets, they are somehow furtive and without the purpose which always marks big city crowds.

Because it was the first of the month, everyone in the subway was smoking today. The sixty cigarette ration is available at the commencement of each month, and the guard who took me in to the clothing depot said that the average German has finished his ration by the tenth. After that he goes to the black market, paying a minimum of eighty cents per cigarette, or concocts his own special mixtures out of butt ends, oak leaves and flower petals.

I ran out of shaving cream today, and from now on will be using a German shaving stick whose chief component is clay. The lather is almost non-existent. Providentially, my tooth paste is still holding out pretty well, and I should reach a permanent camp, where they have such things as American toilet articles, before it vanishes.

We had a particularly sharp Mosquito raid at 8:00 P.M., which we thought was exceedingly considerate of Air Marshal Harris, who normally times his attacks to get us, not to mention the two and a half million Germans left in Berlin, out of bed for an hour or so. The Mosquitoes dropped a large number of target indicators and course markers, which the Germans call "Christmas Trees," and we counted the slow red glow from several unusually big bombs. The guards, who had gone into the usual tailspin when the sirens went, and who had carefully lugged all their kit and their bedding, even their bicycles, into the questionable safety of the covered trenches, stood as usual in the entrance to their shelter griping and cursing and feeling sorry for themselves. We must have made a little too much noise for them, because we were finally ordered out of sight underground, and told it was not "tactful" to show open appreciation of the R.A.F. effort.

Thanks to the long underwear, I am going to bed tonight without trousers for the first time in weeks. It is luxurious.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 3

I HAD another talk with von Strempel today, in which he expressed surprise that I had not "already" been sent to an officers' camp, and offered real hopes of an early repatriation. The exchanges of prisoners come every three or four months, and the last was in August, so that the next one should come sometime before Christmas. It's difficult to avoid conjuring up all sorts of wild hopes after each one of these conferences, because von Strempel and the others concerned have always sounded so optimistic themselves. Each time, I have had to kick myself back into line and tell myself that it's foolish to count on anything like exchange until I'm actually on the way to the Swiss border.

Even if I stay "in" until V-Day, I shall have had a comparatively short stretch of it. Ringelman has had two and a half years, there are tens of thousands who have been in since Dunkirk, and I have heard of one R.A.F. pilot who was shot down fifteen minutes after Chamberlain had declared war and taken prisoner before he knew hostilities had started. Ringelman knows two senior British officers each of whom had four years in prison in World War I, and four and a half years in World War II.

Von Strempel remarked that he had "another little problem child" coming along, and when I asked for details, said he expected to handle the case of Mrs. Legendre within a week or so. He said the authorities had been suspicious of her and of Bob Jennings but had finally decided their capture was a mistake with no sinister tinge about it. For what it was worth, I told him I had talked to them both at Diez, and repeated their story of how they came to be captured. He said he was certain Mrs. Legendre would be sent out through Switzerland. When I suggested I should go too, to act as interpreter, he just smiled.

Von Strempel apologized for not having a bottle of Moselle wine to drink, explaining that a shipment en route from a wholesaler in the Rhineland had unfortunately "drawn the attention of your bombers." He did provide cognac and cigars, and we talked for a long time about many things.

He approaches Germany's present situation from the viewpoint of a professional diplomat, not a party Johnny-Come-Lately of the Schmidt stamp. He is perfectly aware that her position is hopeless for anyone but a Nazi fanatic with the fanatic's ability to draw comfort from wild dreams.

I asked von Strempel, who comes from an old military family himself, to what extent Hitler had dictated military strategy and in how far the army high command and the officers' caste generally had opposed it.

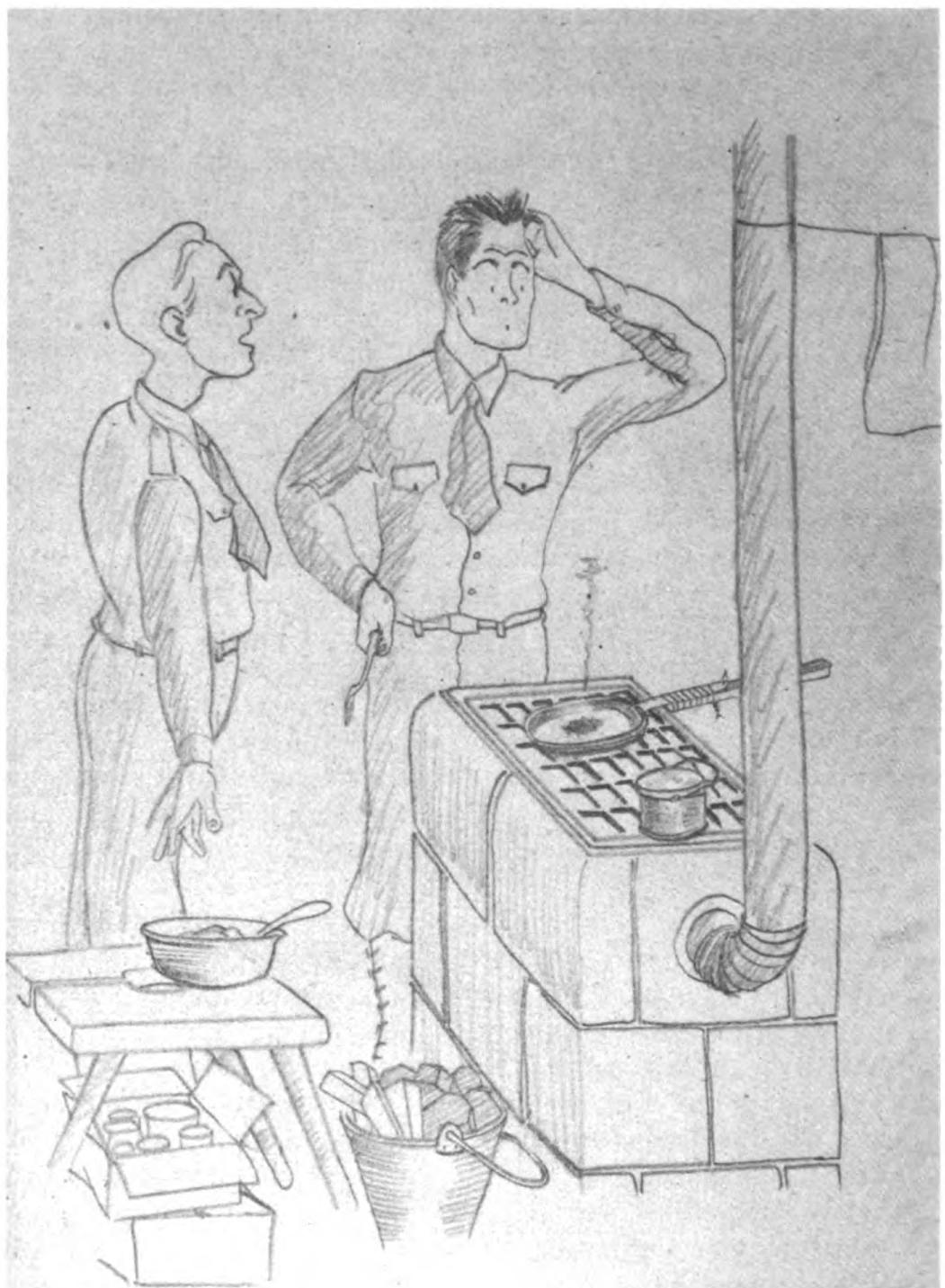
Without committing himself, he made it quite clear that the officers' corps had frequently been appalled at Hitler's "prestige strategy" which resulted in debacles like Alamein and Stalingrad and in the ruinous losses in western France. He also said that it had been outraged at the slap in the face administered by Hitler and Himmler in the hanging of the July 20 plotters, and the subsequent treatment of professional officers as semipariahs who must be watched every moment by their men.

He said that even Nazi bigwigs who two years ago had regarded Japan as a first-rate ally were beginning to admit that she was incapable of waging war on a big-power basis as it was understood in the west, and added he considered it unfortunate that German papers should play up Japanese victory communiquees which all their readers knew would later turn out to be ridiculous.

It reminded me of a remark of Schmidt's during the lunch at the Ribbentrop villa. Schmidt had thrown the Japanese naval "victories" off Formosa and the Philippines up to me as proof that the United States could not handle war on two continents, and that it was about time she realized as much. I told Schmidt that nobody in his right mind ever believed the Japanese communiquees. Schmidt finally smiled and said:

"I must admit that when the Japanese announce a great victory we watch their embassy here very closely. If they stay sober, we say to ourselves, 'this is just another phoney,' but if they all celebrate, we say, 'there must be some truth about that claim.' "

Beyond the professional chest-thumpers who still proclaim total victory and the confusion of everything not German, (and not "honorary Aryan," like the Japanese) I have yet to hear anyone speak a good word for the Japanese. Even the chest-thumpers don't bother any more with Mussolini and his sorry retinue of puppets. The Italian alliance was never popular with anyone in Germany beyond the upper crust Nazis, who have always been able to talk themselves into believing anything they wanted. The average German could never picture Italy as a strong military force, and he always suspected that she would change horses as she did in World War I. The average German is quite aware what a drain Italy was on the German war machine, and now that the "double-cross" has occurred, he hates the Italians worse than



*"And the next time you get one of your ideas, how about writing
your mother and finding out the damned recipe?"*

ever. What he does not understand is that despite everything Mussolini could do, the Italian people always disliked the Germans and hated war even more. You can't explain to him that anyone could ever fundamentally dislike a German. It's going to be a bad shock to him when the allied armies eventually occupy Germany and he discovers that there are no more loans for slum clearance, city halls and public swimming pools.

Tonight after supper, Ringelman and the Italian colonel and I got to talking about today's communique, and ended up by deciding that the Russians are about to take Budapest and that the front in Holland is loosening up. Two hours later, thinking it over, I have lost my fine optimism.

The war is a tremendously personal affair when you are behind barbed wire. The slightest hint of trouble in the carefully worded German communique sends spirits soaring, and the subsequent come-downs are very hard to take. Ringelman says that when Eisenhower invaded Italy thousands of pounds were bet in his camp on an end of hostilities within six months, and that with D-Day in western Europe this year, many prisoners sold their Christmas Red Cross packages in advance for a couple of packages of cigarettes or a bar of chocolate. Those must be very glum jailbirds these days. None of us, even in his wildest flights, can see an end now before spring, and occasionally, in one of those slumps which seem to sweep through an entire group, we start reckoning in terms of years.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 4

SERGEANT PETER VAUGHAN, of Colchester, Essex, England, a parachutist captured at Arnheim, turned up today just as I smoked my last cigarette and began feeling sorry for myself. He donated a package of Camels against future payment, putting me back in the filthy-rich class again. The fact that paying him back is going to mean a long, glum spell sometime soon has no effect on my morale whatsoever. This is a hand-to-mouth existence and the days are bleak enough without worrying about the future.

I can't develop enough strength of character to ration myself on smoking so that the 100 English cigarettes a month plus the fifty French *Elegantes* the Germans sell us last out endlessly at an even tempo of five daily. Even by trading with the kitchen *Feldwebel* or the Italian

priests, I can't get ahead of the game, because the urge to smoke overwhelms me whenever the news is bad, whenever it's good, and whenever there's no news at all and my boredom reaches a new high. I don't miss alcohol in camp, although it's very pleasant whenever someone like von Sivers or von Strempel provides it, and I'm sure it would be possible to go entirely without tobacco. Certainly it would be easier for me than the rationing business—one after breakfast, one after lunch, one before supper and two after supper—which I tried for a couple of days. But the pleasant aspects of life are so few and far between at the moment that I certainly don't intend to lose out on any of them.

Come to think of it, smoking, cooking, and opening the Red Cross parcel once a fortnight are about the only pleasures there are. Mail from home would be such an event that it's beyond all description, but I have at least two months of waiting before I can hope for that, and this camp is such a deadwater of odd souls that no mail ever seems to reach it, anyway. Conversation should rank as a pleasure, but since it invariably ends up on the subject of food, it contains too many elements of self-torture. Card playing, checkers and various odd jobs around the barrack are just time-killers.

Sleep makes life possible, and some sort of compensating mechanism in the body seems to endow any prisoner with an unlimited capacity for sleep. Except on the occasions when one of the guards forgets to throw the master switch, our lights go out at 9:00 P.M. We talk for a while in the dark, but usually are quiet by 9:30. Since the black-out must be maintained until after 7:00 A.M., we sleep until Nikolai comes in with the "coffee" at 8:00. Often I knock off an hour or two for good measure after lunch, a thing which I never could manage before.

Sleep is a lot better than thinking. The average prisoner has too many potential worries—his family, his business, his farm or the future he must try to build—to make thinking very enjoyable. He probably dreams a lot in his sleep, but the dreams are usually pleasant, and too many of the waking thoughts are not.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 6

I SPENT most of my thirty-fifth birthday today in bed under my ragtag collection of blankets, trying to keep warm.

The normal allowance of six briquets per day is hopelessly inadequate to heat the room, and our only hope is to bribe or steal extra

from the Germans—the only way of getting anything in prison camp, where no request is ever satisfied if it can be put off. Today there is no coal of any description in camp, and a cold northeast wind is tearing through the gaps in the board partitions.

It is bad enough during the day, when it is next to impossible to keep your feet warm against the combination of cold, draft and bad blood circulation. At night it's infinitely worse, because the fire dies, the temperature drops and almost invariably we are routed out into the air-raid trenches for one or two hours while the Mosquitoes roam the night skies over Berlin and give it another "touch-up." Almost all the recent raids have been in the northern part of town, a comfortable distance from us, and we have had only three or four bombs close enough to hear in the air. The closest probably landed at least a half mile away. But the hour in the shelters chills everyone to the bone and the bedclothes are so bad that it takes at least another hour in bed to thaw out.

I seem to notice a decrease in the Berlin barrage even since I have been here. Older prisoners say it has thinned out remarkably since September. Unquestionably, more and more guns are being shipped to the west and east, where the coming offensives must be held. Berlin's famous barrage today is a skimpy affair compared to London's. To the southwest, however, there is still a great concentration of guns in the Magdeburg defense belt, which acts as a partial screen for Berlin and for the industry of east central Germany.

My birthday was marked by two events. The first was the return of my new "uniform" from the Russian tailor's. With all the alterations, the Danish trousers feel like a tent, but my American trousers and combat jacket have been turned over to Nikolai to be soaked for forty-eight hours, washed and pressed. I'm going to put them away and save them for the day of exchange or of liberation. The second event was the appearance of a thin slice of pork about three inches square in each man's soup. It's the first piece of straight meat I have gotten from the Germans since 'way back at Dompierre when the *Kampfgruppe Ottenbacher* went into the slaughtering business.

I opened my last hoarded American salmon can for dinner, in way of celebration. It didn't seem much like a birthday.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 8

ROOSEVELT'S reelection was considered important enough to rate one fifty-word paragraph in the bottom corner of page one in today's afternoon papers.

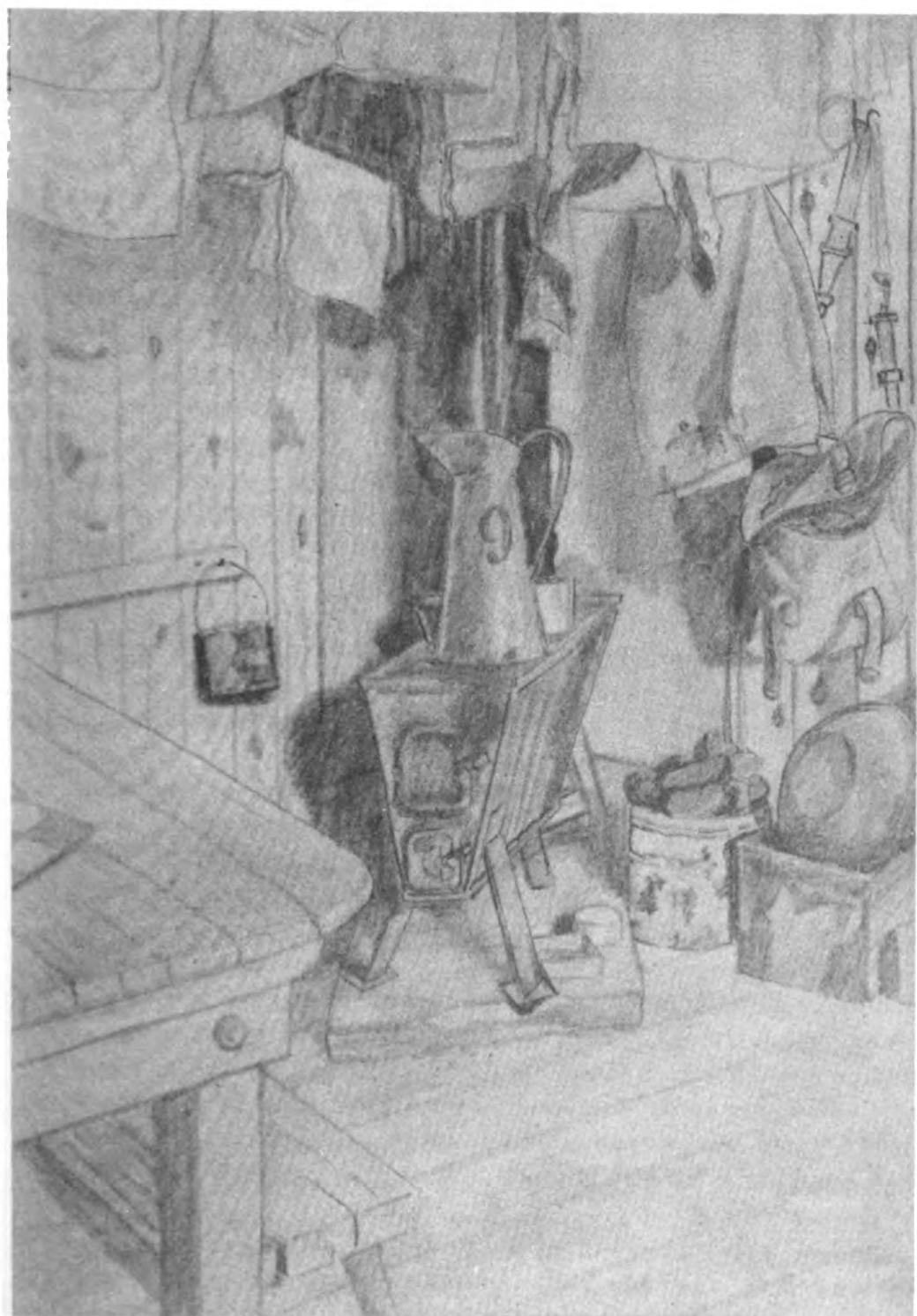
Most informed Germans had expected it and discounted it in advance. The average German was for Dewey, if only because his policies were not well-known, and because Roosevelt's were so well-hated. All prisoners will be cheering, regardless of their nationality. In my brief experience, Roosevelt rates even higher with American prisoners than with combat troops, and the latter must be at least seventy-five per cent for him. To the non-American prisoners, particularly the people of the little nations, Roosevelt is the world's great hope.

The papers are much more interested today in the announcement, contained in the first paragraph of the High Command communique, that V-II is now being fired into London. After the fanfare which accompanied the German communique on V-I, I would have expected the press to go hog-wild with gory details of destruction. They make no comment as yet, and the headlines are very cool and factual. The guards show no excitement whatever.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 11

ARMISTICE DAY, as has been customary in Germany ever since the last war, is being completely ignored today. There must be millions of Germans who, remembering that November 11 is Germany's day of "national shame," are thinking tonight of the day of even worse defeat which is coming, and of the catastrophic years which are bound to follow.

I saw Germany first in 1924, when the nation was taking its first staggering steps back toward normalcy following the terrible inflation of the mark. Berlin was glum and drab, and the streets were full of beggars, most of them veterans who could get no jobs in the ruins of Germany economy. The glumness and drabness were nothing to what stalks Berlin today, with official Germany still proclaiming the certainty of victory. The Germans have fed far better during this war, thanks to exhaustive planning and the loot of an entire continent, but air-



Corner-Zehlendorf

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power alone has created hundreds of thousands of beggars where there were a few thousand before, and the peace terms to which Germany can look forward this time are a guarantee of national beggary which probably will last for years.

All over Germany today, money is changing hands, in post-dated checks, in favorite shirts or bedroom slippers, or in Red Cross parcels. Armistice Day was a convenient date for kriegie bets on the war's end, and there's a slim time ahead for several thousand prisoners. Fortunately I was captured too late to fall into a bet. If anyone had offered me even money, I'd have bet on September 12 that the war would be over by today. It's strange now to look back on the easy optimism of early September. Hopeless as Germany is today, she is capable of one more big effort, and it will be several months before she can be beaten down.

Goebbels is now plugging V-II for its full propaganda value, arguing that the British can't possibly take it on top of the "terrible destruction" wrought by V-I, that London and all big centers will have to be evacuated, and so on. It doesn't make much appeal to the average German, who after four years of attacks on England knows perfectly well that this sort of thing has no real bearing on the end result. What he'd like to see is some new miracle weapon to roll back the allied fronts.

Two new recruits arrived tonight, a strangely assorted pair but already fast friends, thanks to the bond of common misery aboard a German train. They are Lieutenant Martin Wiethaupt, of St. Louis, Mo., and a tough Polish sergeant from the parachute brigade, who shall be called Polski.

Wiethaupt was attached to the ground personnel of the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy, and by all rights should never have seen a German in a position to take him prisoner. He elected to spend a short leave with a friend in the infantry, however; the friend took him for a jeep ride behind the front; they were stopped on the road by a man wearing an American army greatcoat and discovered themselves in the hands of a German patrol which had filtered through the "lines." That's all part of this sort of war.

Polski, who started his fighting career against the Russians toward the end of the last war and who continued in the struggle with the Ukrainians, was a schoolteacher in Lvov until September, 1939, when the Germans attacked Poland. He made his way back to Lvov, where, he says, he was picked up by the Russians and, all in the space of ten minutes, was informed that as a native of Lvov he was now a Soviet

citizen, and that as a Soviet citizen he was sentenced to ten years hard labor as a "lifelong antiCommunist."

According to Polski, he and a thousand other Poles were sent in one transport to near Murmansk, where he spent a year. He finally was permitted to join the Polish army recruited in Russia under the agreement between General Sikorsky and Marshal Stalin, and eventually reached England via the Middle East. He joined the Polish parachutists, and was sent to Arnhem in charge of ammunition for the Polish antitank guns. He discovered on arrival that nobody had ever heard of the Polish antitank guns, and roamed the countryside shooting up Germans until he was finally captured in the heroic debacle of the First Airborne Division.

Wiethaupt presumably is here because he is a rarity among prisoners, an air force ground officer. Polski undoubtedly is here because the Germans are eternally trying to use Polish hatred of Russia to further their own aims. He says he is looking forward very much to his first interview.

Wiethaupt is still wearing the light summer equipment issued for summer in Italy, and remarked hopefully tonight that he supposed he would be issued here with everything he needs. I think he was pretty disconcerted when I told him about my own efforts and showed him what I finally had ended up with. I'm up against a new problem, incidentally. Both my boots now have such holes in the soles that I can't do any walking except when the ground is dry. In another week the holes will have worn clear through, and I'll be trying to make do with cardboard insoles made from the Red Cross carton. The Germans insist that there are no boots available, although we know there are ample supplies near Berlin. They also say there is no leather for repairs.

The fact of the matter is that beyond the minimum necessary for existence, which the prison camp food ration allegedly represents, the Germans don't give a tinker's damn what happens to their prisoners. Any request which goes beyond the bare subsistence minimum is a matter of complete indifference, and nothing can be gotten without bribery, theft, or on rare occasions, bullying.

The average prisoner works himself into a boil every time he thinks of the treatment German prisoners get in England, Canada and the United States.

The complaints against treatment by the Germans would lose a lot of weight if the prison camp authorities even made the gesture of complying with the Geneva Convention. They don't, and I never yet have

found a prisoner who doesn't have dozens of incidents to prove it. In the matter of food, the Geneva Convention provides that prisoners should receive the same ration as the depot troops of the nation holding them prisoner. We are in a position here to see what the Germans get every day, because the camp is so small that we are permitted into the kitchen to fetch hot water, do a certain amount of cooking, or get our marmalade and sugar rations. There has been no day since I arrived when the German guards have not gotten something more than we, a chunk of sausage one day, jam another, candy another, cheese a fourth. Their portions are bigger, and they may have seconds. Their soup is always made with meat stock or browned butter. Ours almost never is.

Compared with other camps, our food is good here. It is better cooked and seasoned, and we get more cheese and jam than the average. When I suggested the other day to the noncom in charge of *Kommando* 806 that we weren't getting what the guards got, there was a terrible explosion from the kitchen *Feldwebel*, who accused me of espionage, and a long tirade from Remy, the noncom in charge, who said I was a trouble-maker who had disrupted the "good relations" of the entire camp. I told him I didn't think he had seen any trouble yet whatever, and that if I ever decided to start making protests, he'd be well aware of it. Since I still hope to be moved soon, it's not worth while starting a row.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 12

I HAD a long talk today with Polski, who speaks almost no English but has fluent command of German. His bitterness toward the world in general is a hint of the legacy of hatreds which this war will leave throughout Europe.

Polski always has hated the Russians as only a Pole can hate them. In 1939 he learned to hate the Germans. As a prisoner in the Kola peninsula until 1941 he received treatment, he says, which beggars description. He finally came to England looking forward to a new Poland which would rise with the help of Churchill and Roosevelt. When relations, such as they were, between Moscow and the Polish refugee government reached a crisis early this year, Polski and thousands of others expected British influence to prevail. They could not reconcile themselves to the fact that Poland was by now a minor issue in a world at war, and that nobody in England or the United States

was prepared to fight the Red Army for the territory beyond the Curzon Line.

Polski looks on the Warsaw uprising of this summer as an all-round betrayal of Polish patriotism. As far as he is concerned, the insurgents were encouraged by England and the United States, promised assistance by the Russians, and then left to die in the inferno of central Warsaw because the west was unable to help effectively, and the Russians refused to. Polski says the Russians deliberately sat and watched the blasting of Warsaw and the crushing of the revolt, one of the bitterest street battles in history, because they knew that in the ruins would die exactly those elements in the Polish nation which were best qualified to resist communization of Poland.

He says that in Warsaw the Russians were engineering on a grand scale what they had done in Wilno, where Polish insurgents routed the German garrison only to find that the Russians, entering the liberated city, arrested all their leaders and threw the rank and file into the Red Army.

Nobody in my position could hope to know the facts of such stories as this. Perhaps someday I shall. What seems so important at the moment is that tens of millions of Europeans on both sides of the struggle will come out of this war with such deep-seated hatreds, born in centuries-old rivalry and conditioned by years of propaganda, that rendering Europe fit for peace will take generations of world effort.

Wiethaupt is a nonsmoker, and Vaughan and I, both of whom are willing to sacrifice our chocolate, have traded him out of ten cigarettes each. Wiethaupt sees lush times ahead, since the Russians are always prepared to give up their German cheese for three cigarettes. Those poor devils get a monthly ration of fifty grams of some sort of semicured tobacco so strong it almost blows off the back of your head. After anything up to four years of smoking it, they say British or American cigarettes have no taste whatever.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 13

OVER a hundred French noncoms were quartered in the camp overnight last night while their own barracks, somewhere nearby, are fumigated. They say they all refused to "go civilian," and as a result are forced to work twelve hours a day, starting at 5:30 A.M., in a munitions factory. They say it's very heavy work, and that the ration they receive consists of a half pound of bread, a quart of soup, and small quantities

of margarine, cheese and jam. They say that the French who have "gone civilian" do much better, that they have "too much *chic*" for the Germans and practically take over the black market wherever they are. According to camp gossip here, the old Alexanderplatz prison in Berlin, which was the central city jail, is now occupied entirely by civilian French, and anything from a whole beef to a grand piano may be obtained there for a price.

Both Wiethaupt and Polski are card players, and their arrival gives us enough candidates to be sure of a card game at any time. Ringelman has one deck of cards he has been nursing since his days in an Italian prison camp, and I succeeded in getting another deck from a guard for three cigarettes. Hearts and rummy are the two mainstays, and we have tried bridge a couple of times. Vaughan and Polski, when they are not swapping reminiscences of Arnheim and commiserating each other on the bad luck which landed them in prison, tangle over a chess board which I otherwise use as a drawing board. My artistic product is slow and labored, because it's very hard to buckle down to anything in prison, but it does consume a lot of time. It's amazing, in fact, how quickly a day goes. Time-wasting becomes a fine art in prison.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 15

THE first snow flurries of the year warned us today of a long, cold time ahead—on six miserable chunks of third-rate coal dust per day. Ringelman set about negotiating a little more with a young Russian named Alex who runs the shower room, and the result is a whole bucket of briquets this evening. Most of them are being hidden around the room against the day when it's no longer possible to negotiate any.

One of the German guards appeared at the gate, where he was to stand a two-hour mount, wearing huge woven straw overshoes about two feet long, a foot high and a foot wide. These are filled with loose straw, and are tied on over the normal boots. Since the average guard here doesn't know one end of his rifle from the other, can't see clearly much over ten feet, and couldn't run fifty even without his overshoes, escape out of here ought to be a cinch if there were only any place to escape to. The chief stumbling block is that nobody can hope to strike out across country in winter, when there are no fruits or vegetables to be stolen from the fields and it is impossible to sleep the night in the



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open. Travel by train requires forged papers, and in a camp like this there is no organization to provide them.

Today's morning papers carry brief mention of the loss of the *Tirpitz*, Germany's last remaining naval "threat." The old guard with the straw overshoes told me about it first, remarking that the navy was *pleite*—broke—like everything else in Germany. Then he went off lug- ging his clodhoppers through the slush. Hitler, who always secretly wanted to make friends of the British, on his own terms, of course, looked on the naval treaty which legalized Germany's secret building as his greatest diplomatic triumph. I have always felt that the denuncia- tion of the treaty in the summer of 1939 was a decision reached with more regret than any Hitler ever made. The world can probably thank Hitler's ego for dictating the construction of ships of the line like the *Tirpitz*, the *Bismarck*, the *Gneisenau* and the *Scharnhorst*, and of the unfinished aircraft carrier *Graf Zeppelin* at the expense of the sub- marine fleet. The German battle fleet has tied down British and Ameri- can battleships which might have been used elsewhere, but it has never had more than a nuisance value. The submarine fleet, with just a little bigger head start, might early in the war have turned Britain's chronic crisis into disaster.

There is a lot of talk in the camp and outside about the "new sub- marine offensive" which is scheduled to open soon. As far as the uneducated public is concerned, there are fantastic yarns about U-boats "insulated against radar" or "driven by rockets" which will defy pur- suit and isolate the allied armies in Europe while the Germans finish them off at their leisure. Basically, nobody believes this sort of thing, because it has become obvious to every German that the U-boat cam- paign, regardless of the damage it did, failed to stop the provisioning and arming of England, and later the launching of the continental invasion. The Germans, however, have developed a remarkable ability to boost their morale with stories like this, even though they don't believe them.

What makes the new U-boat campaign sound much more plausible is remarks by people like Schmidt who are on the inside track and do know what plans Germany has for the next critical months. If Schmidt had intended to pump me full of propaganda for what effect it might have outside, he would obviously have arranged my transfer by now. It would have some value to release a correspondent who had had a chance to see for himself that Germany is not yet at the collapse point, and who felt that she still had a shot or two in the locker. But Schmidt apparently was talking for his own edification, and he did put a lot of

faith in the new gear which would revive the battered submarine fleet.

Since yesterday Russian prisoners throughout Germany have been given a chance to digest the "call to arms" issued by a stooge named General Wlassow, who announced the formation of a "free" Russian army pledged to fight side by side with Germany against Communism, and eventually to reestablish the Kerensky constitution. Wlassow, who claims to have been a trusted Red Army officer through some of the bitterest fighting of the past three years, issued a manifesto of fourteen superficially attractive points in Prague yesterday. All indications are that Russian prisoners will be propagandized full blast to "volunteer for the crusade." Among other things, all the Russians in this camp, except for Nikolai and his die-hard room-mates, are to be gathered together for a broadcast Wlassow will make a few days from now. Russian officers in German uniform have already been circulating among them.

According to Nikolai, who is our authority on all things Russian, the general reception to Wlassow's appeal has been a loud horse laugh. He says there will be a certain percentage who join because they will eat better and sleep warmer than they do in prison camp. Then he draws his finger significantly across his throat and adds that these men will be "*kaput mit Deutschland*." *Kaput* means busted in both German and Russian.

Nikolai says all Russians realize that Wlassow's army can expect no adequate arms at a time when Germany's own field armies are often hamstrung for lack of equipment, and that at the best it would be just a mass of cannon fodder to be sacrificed to save Nazi lives. What Russian prisoners fear, he says, is that those who refuse to volunteer will be systematically mistreated or starved by the Germans.

In my experience, many Russian prisoners, having had the chance to see how their fellow workers live in western Europe, now know that Russia in the past has been anything but a paradise. If they have their way after the war, the people will begin to benefit from the country's tremendous resources. Many of them have been propagandized into believing that Stalin considers all prisoners cowards who were taken because they feared to die, and that they will be shot when they return to Russia. As a group, however they remain Russian, and they loathe the Germans as no western prisoner could possibly loathe them.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 16

WLASSOW'S recruitment campaign is getting the full support of the German press. Nikolai says the Russians in the next compound gathered up all copies of his manifesto last night and burned them. So much for that.

We got to arguing this afternoon about the purpose behind the sudden publicity for the "free" Russian army, coming as it does after a series of bad disappointments in the Russians who were sent in to fight the allies in the west. Does it mean that the Germans have finally given up all hope of making a deal with Stalin, or is it a move intended to rally support inside as well as outside Russia, and to put new pressure on the Kremlin? Whatever it is, it looks like a pretty forlorn hope.

There are about three squirts left in my tube of tooth paste. I asked for some German paste today, and was told it would be here in a few days. I also asked for a new brush, but was told that would be quite impossible. I still have my original two brushes, but they look like wheatfields after a cloudburst.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 18

THIS being a particularly dull day, I thought I'd do a brief sketch of a few personalities connected with this camp. They are the men with whom I have come most in contact, and since the guards and the non-coms and the camp commandant can by their own personalities make a camp bearable or turn it into a minor hell, they are worth knowing.

Arbeitskommando 806, the only section of this camp under Major Heimpel's control, comes definitely into the bearable class. The food is better than average, and so are the accommodations. The great drawback is that it is so small that there are none of the extra facilities like library, amateur theatricals, sports and organized prisoner activities which enable a kriegie in a permanent camp to fill in his time without trouble. And there is very little companionship. At the best, here, there have been only four English speaking prisoners.

A camp commandant can, by exerting himself a little, obtain for his prisoners the maximum in rations, in fuel, in clothing, and in extras like games, books, and sports equipment, either from the Ger-

mans or from the International Red Cross and the Y.M.C.A. Or he can, like the commandants at Strasbourg and Limburg, pay absolutely no attention to the prisoners and leave them to eke out a miserable existence on the bare minimum ration.

Major Heimpel falls somewhere in between. This tall, craggy man with his Prussian rimless monocle, who looks like the raw-boned type of Englishman when he wears his tweeds and felt hat, seems well enough disposed toward prisoners. He will promise almost anything when he is in the mood, and as often as not he fulfills the promise. His great drawback is that he is in charge of several small units like *Kommando 806*, and that he has other intelligence activities of undetermined importance which take most of his time. He almost never comes to the camp, and a prisoner who wants to demand something must normally work through an intermediary without knowing what happens to his request. Some of the prisoners here think they are better off than they would be anywhere else, and are quite content to stay. Personally, I am going to be uncomfortable until I can secure my transfer to some camp where there are a lot of Americans. I don't like being held at special disposition in Berlin, because it's too easy to lay hands on me. Heimpel either can not or will not do anything about a transfer. On the one occasion I have been able to talk to him, he said that was unfortunately beyond his province, but that he'd refer the matter on. He did send out by Wiethaupt a package of American tobacco because he had heard I liked a pipe, but it is small consolation for my inability to get any action on transfer or repatriation. Heimpel classes with most prisoners as a "glad hand artist" who hates to be bothered by minor matters and will promise almost anything to avoid them.

Two *Feldwebels* do the actual administration of Stalag III-D, including our *Arbeitskommando*. The first, a little man named Koenig who wears exaggerated uniforms and who inescapably looks like a cross between Adolf Hitler and Mickey Mouse, runs the guard. He is so small that he gives sop to his overblown importance in a series of stentorian shouts which starts shortly after 8:00 A.M. each day and continues until after the last nightly air raid. Koenig shouts at everyone except the five prison cats, which gambol around him in the certainty that he'll filch them some food out of the kitchen. Koenig is typical of Germany in his overbearing attitude toward his fellow men and his saccharine sweetness toward the lower animals. His bark is much worse than his bite. A prisoner can stare him down. The guards don't dare to.

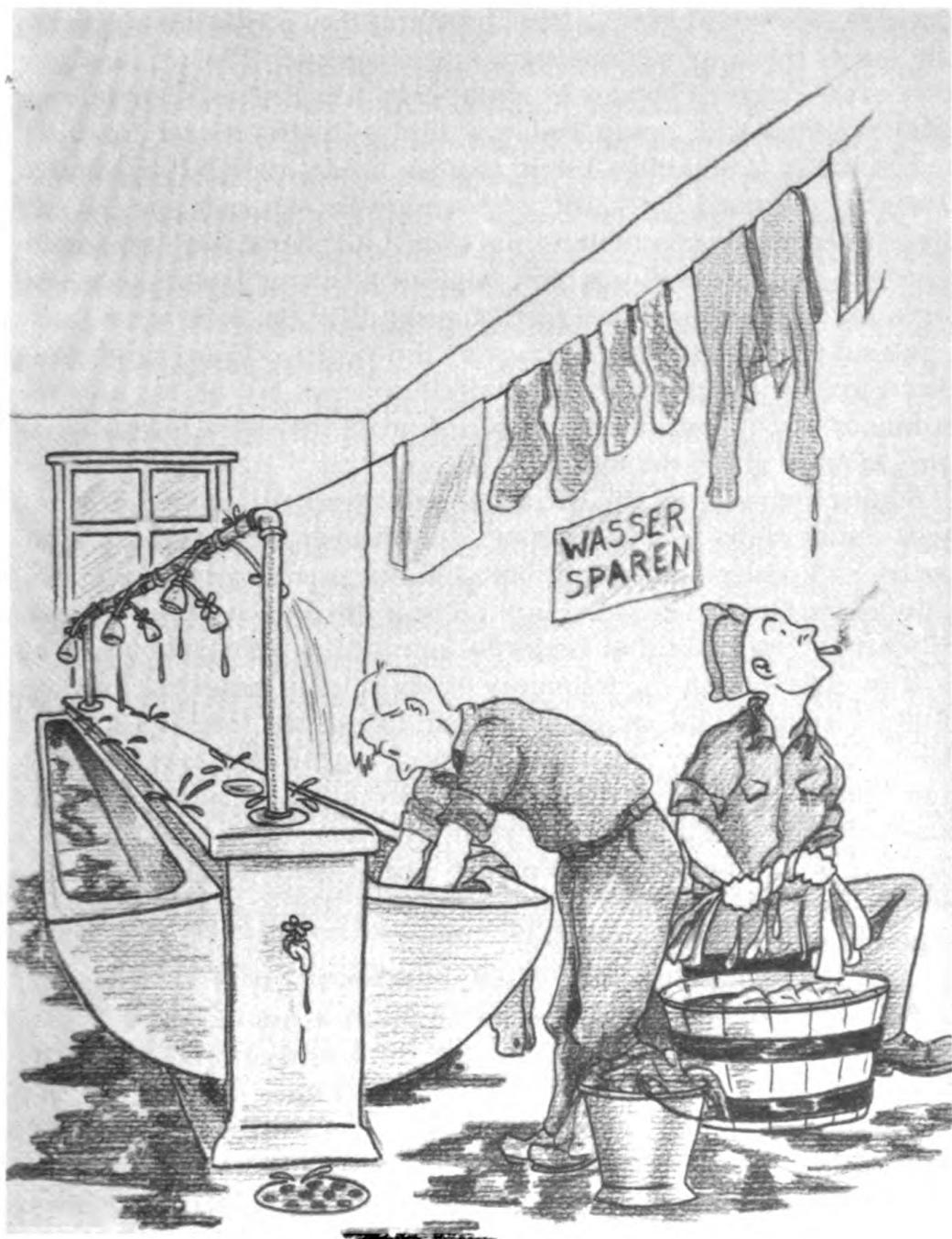
The second *Feldwebel*, named Merkwirth, is in charge of the kitchen. This he runs well. He glares at me at the moment because I

dared suggest the Germans get more than the prisoners, but he'll get over it. Merkwirth has a son who was captured by the Americans in Normandy. When he heard the other day from the boy, and discovered he was being well-treated and fed, his attitude toward the prisoners improved tremendously. Merkwirth is chiefly interested in being left alone in his kitchen, in the shipments of cigars which his wife sends him, in a youngish blonde who visits him a couple of times a week, and in the small trades conducted in his little office whereby he acquires coffee and tea for himself and cholate for his granddaughter.

Under the *Feldwebel* in the kitchen is a cook named Schmidt, who lost a finger and received a bad foot wound on the Russian front a couple of years ago, and whose one desire is never to see the front again. Schmidt, like most Germans in the prison camp racket, knows he has a soft job. The best way to keep it, he says, is to cook as well as possible and tread on no one's toes. He is a textile mechanic by profession, and when the war news is bad and he starts thinking of the postwar depression, he wails loud and long about disaster. The rest of the time he picks arguments with prisoners just to bolster his own flagging enthusiasm for the war. In this mood he tries jovially slapping the backs of the assortment of guards, telling them to be of good cheer. Most of them have chilblains, rheumatism and what prisoners call "the Moldavian Crud," meaning out-of-sortsness, and are long since past the cheering-up stage.

The actual running of *Arbeitskommando* 806 falls on a *Gefreite*—lance corporal—named Remy. Remy before the war was a merchant in Essen, and had become prosperous enough to keep a couple of trotting horses which he raced at various meetings. He is a cadaverous man of forty-eight with very bad eyes and little or no vitality who tries his best to treat prisoners well, but who allows a hundred small annoyances each day to drive him into despond. Remy is worried about the bombing of Essen, which he says is already a shambles, worried about the recurring physical examinations which eventually will pass him for front line duty, and worried above all that Major Heimpel will decide he can't handle his present job, and send him on elsewhere less pleasant. Remy tried bawling me out as camp bad boy the other day and I shouted back at him. I suspect the letting off of steam did us both good.

Until recently, Remy's assistant was a little *Obergefreite* named Peters, who outranked him by a grade but whom nobody would ever have put in full charge of anything. Peters is a barber from north Berlin who either has a bad heart or has succeeded in convincing the doc-



Laundry

tors of it. He keeled over so frequently that they finally are mustering him out of the army without regrets or either side. The prisoners are sorry to see Peters go because he cut their hair, price one cigarette, kept them supplied with gossip and was always in the market for black market trades of all kinds. Peters now has been superseded by another *Obergefreite* named Borchardt, a fifty-eight year old landscape and still life painter who is miserable in the army. Borchardt is a very intelligent man who knows clearly how hopeless Germany's position has become, but who because of his position must sit by the hour while Remy proclaims the impossibility of cracking the Siegfried Line. Borchardt's efforts to help the prisoners are perfectly sincere, but he has no sense of humor and is invariably scandalized at the few weak jokes I have tried to make about the food.

Father confessor to our barrack is a dodderer named Herr Liepe—he is always *Herr*—who in palmier days ornamented the city administration of Potsdam and who still retains the precise pigeon-hole mentality of the German civil servant. Liepe is usually selected to conduct prisoners on walks, or into Berlin for questioning. He considers it his duty to elaborate on the frequency of the subway trains, the beauties of the Tiergarten, the merits of German forests, the traditions of Potsdam. He takes a very philosophic outlook on the war, never committing himself one way or another beyond the hope that "we'll all be happier soon." Liepe visits our room at least twice a day to cadge a cigarette or a cup of tea, and repays in lighter flints, white rolls from a nearby baker's, and odd bits of philosophy. He acts as a tipster on events in the camp office.

Bartsch, who is older than Liepe, in other words in his late fifties, is the camp Communist and makes no bones about it. Bartsch hates Hitler and all his works, hates the war which robbed him of his trade of binding jazz-band orchestrations, and walks with him are one long tirade against the Nazi system. The tirade becomes so loud at times that it embarrasses even a prisoner. Walks with Bartsch are also a lesson in improvisation, German style. His pockets are loaded with cigarettes rolled from the contents of a big box under his bunk, which he keeps filling with cherry leaves, aster petals, rosebuds and anything else vaguely calculated to be smokable. Along the woodland paths, he stops constantly to test various acorns for their coffee possibilities. It seems that Frau Bartsch, wherever she may be, makes much better ersatz in her own oven than the Nazis ever could. Bartsch's chief complaint against the Nazis as Christmas approaches is that he won't have any presents to give his grandchildren. He particularly wants an elec-

tric train. When I broke down and confessed that there is an electric train stored somewhere in Berlin which belongs to myself and Larry Etter, with whom I shared an apartment, he almost wept for joy. He offered me a case of brandy in exchange, and promised to smuggle it into camp himself, and was disconsolate for an hour when I pointed out I was in no position to discover the whereabouts of the train.

Schneider, a silversmith from the Black Forest, runs Bartsch a close second. He is in favor of hanging the whole Nazi regime and making friends with everyone, including the Russians. Schneider's feet hurt and he has asthma, and walking with him is a slow proposition, like strolling with Liepe, who prefers to stop on the banks of the lake nearby to watch the old men fishing for carp or tiny perch.

Hermann Teudt is the kriegie's friend, and is always in hot water for it. Teudt is a bachelor of forty-five who comes from the Moabit section of Berlin, a quarter as noted here as the Bowery in New York or Lambeth Walk in London, and for roughly the same reasons. He has been bombed out of three apartments, always *in absentia*, and all his relatives have been bombed out as well. Teudt doesn't mind. The only thing which concerns him, as it did thousands of Londoners during the *blitz*, is the frequency with which *kneipes*, beer halls and other drinking spots are obliterated by air attack. Teudt had a long spell on the Russian front, and wears several decorations. As soon as a dentist can fit him with a couple of plates, he is supposed to go on active duty again, but Teudt says his dentist is very busy and can't get the materials anyway, so he figures he has a lot of time left. Teudt, like any good soldier, thinks the majority of army regulations are rubbish, and he pays no attention whatever to instructions to confine prisoners' walks to the Grunewald forest, where they can't see anything they shouldn't or otherwise offend the Berlin citizenry. Teudt likes long, fast walks, preferably into Berlin. When he goes off duty once each week, he always has a lot of errands to do for the prisoners who treat him right, and unless he runs into a few old pals early in the game, he usually discharges the errands.

Teudt never has any cigarettes, because he consumes his monthly ration inside the first three days and spends the rest of the time borrowing. I am his chief victim—I who am usually borrowing myself—but probably it's only right because Teudt developed a deep feeling of kinship for me when he discovered I knew several pubs where he has done a lot of off-hour drinking in the past.

Teudt said the other day that when things get really tough for Ger-

many he'll lead two or three of us off on a walk and take us into the American lines.

"Then I'll be your prisoner and I'll give you my Bulgarian automatic to guard me with," he said. "But you'd damned well better be ready to run errands for me. Don't forget, I'll know all the gags."

The rest of the guards don't make much difference, one way or another. Some are pretty decent. Some, like the wizened corporal who has charge of the two police dogs chained just outside the gate, take every opportunity to bawl at the prisoners, and often are told to go mind their own business. The remainder are just middle-aged men who struggle along somehow with the long guard mounts and drills and inspections, who grumble in an orderly German way at the food and the cold and the air raids, and who wish fervently they were back home with their families.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 19

ALL the Russians in camp had to listen to Wlassow's radio appeal today. They were sent into a big hall somewhere in Berlin, and returned convinced that they are "for it," one way or another. They think they will be put into the army, regardless of their own wishes, as fast as arms can be gotten together for it, or that they'll be sent into arms factories as "volunteers."

The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, which has been thoroughly Nazified but which still makes more sense than the other papers, warned its readers today that a concentric attack on both fronts can be expected to develop in the near future, and that it probably will be decisive. The paper hinted at the danger of a breakthrough near Aachen, and at the shakiness of the Metz bastion. It warned that the Russian offensive near Budapest, although a major effort, is just a sideshow to the climax attack in Poland which must be expected soon. The whole tone of the article was pessimistic.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 20

I FINALLY ran out of tooth paste today, and when I again asked for a German brand, was told it had now been ordered that no tooth paste be sold to prisoners. That little problem was solved thanks to Liepe,

who bought me two tubes outside the camp, collecting a couple of cigarettes as commission. The German brand, which I tried out tonight, goes to pieces in your mouth and forms no lather whatsoever, but it has a sweetish and vaguely medicinal taste, and is probably better than nothing.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
NOVEMBER 24

AMERICAN tanks burst into Strasbourg yesterday, according to today's German communique, and although the papers claim there is heavy fighting and that they will be driven out again, all the Germans here admit that the break-through is a serious matter. They say nobody ever expects to win back territory these days, and that each loss may be classed at once as permanent. The great danger for the Germans is that the Alsace front will crumble, laying all of south Germany open to a full-scale crossing of the Rhine.

I am making a series of violent demonstrations, by note to Major Heimpel, for a pair of boot laces and another pair of socks. My right boot lace has been tied together five times and my left, three. My original socks cannot be darned any more. They pull to pieces under the needle. The one pair I have gotten from the Germans has been darned twice already. Ringelman loaned me an extra pair, and they went to pieces in one day. I darned them and gave them back. Such things are too valuable.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 1

LIFE in prison camp is one series of minor climaxes, each of which seems tremendously important at the time. Each represents the realization of some long cherished hope, and there are the corresponding let-downs when a hope is finally shattered.

Your climax may be represented by a pair of socks, ten cigarettes, a food package, a few razor blades, or—in the still distant future, for me—mail from home. Other prisoners warn that it will be at least six weeks more before I can hope for the first answer to the letters I have been able to write pretty regularly. There is a lot of comfort in being able to write, even though we often wonder just what percentage of our letters the Germans ever send out. At least we can let our families

and our friends know that we are all right. But the first letter in reply will mean more than words could ever describe.

Lacking any hope for letters until after the first of the year, I am reduced to smaller items of hope. Today I scored on two. Major Heimpel has ignored my notes on boot laces, but Vaughan found an extra pair in the "survivor's kit" for airmen which he was issued at a transit camp en route to Berlin. And I got ten razor blades from the kitchen *Feldwebel* in return for a small cake of Red Cross soap. Once in a dog's age, you can get one razor blade out of the German authorities, but normally they say they have none. Yet today's *Angriff* prints an item stating that German prisoners in the United States have complained in letters home that they get only one razor blade every three days. Dear, me.

We were told today that the Red Cross packages, which are issued once every two weeks, must be consumed within three days of issue. A few items like sugar, tea and milk are excepted. After considerable argument, we succeeded in getting the Germans to agree to issue a parcel to one of the four of us every three or four days. We will split them up and make the food spread out. The German fear of escapes is obviously growing with every week, and they are taking no chances on secret food hoards which might be taken along in a break. There is no danger of them here, anyway. Nobody gets private parcels from home, nobody has extra cigarettes for big-scale bribery. Everyone is on a hand-to-mouth basis.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 5

NOON today brought the most magnificent exhibition of airpower it has yet been my good fortune to witness. It was a full-dress day raid on Berlin by the Eighth U.S. Army Air Force.

We were waiting hopefully for lunch when the prealarm sirens went. Within a couple of minutes Teudt had dropped in to tip us that the radio was reporting "strong enemy battle formations" headed for Berlin itself. The city is so deep inside Germany that normally, if the attacking planes are headed elsewhere they turn off well in advance of Berlin, and the sirens never sound. As a consequence, we had seen no allied air activity in daylight since my arrival.

By the time the sirens blew the full alarm, about five minutes later, everyone in Berlin knew this was to be a heavy raid. All traffic had stopped, even to the subways, and the whole city was under cover.

From the direction of Potsdam there grew a low mutter, and we all watched from the mouth of our covered trench for the first sight of the formations. Suddenly they were there in the blue sky, already well above the horizon—three groups of silvery pinpoints almost lost in the perfect sky, each group trailing long furrows of white vapor across the blue.

Then we made out more groups beyond and slightly to the north, and more off beyond them. The mutter grew to a steady throb. The ack-ack bursts began puffing out in clusters ahead of the formations.

Suddenly we caught sight of the fighters, high over the bombers in groups of three or four, sweeping in great arcs across the heavens leaving their own delicate plumes of white behind them. We looked for signs of a dog-fight, but could distinguish no German planes except for one lone plume which traced itself in slow arcs in the eastern sky and never came close to the attack.

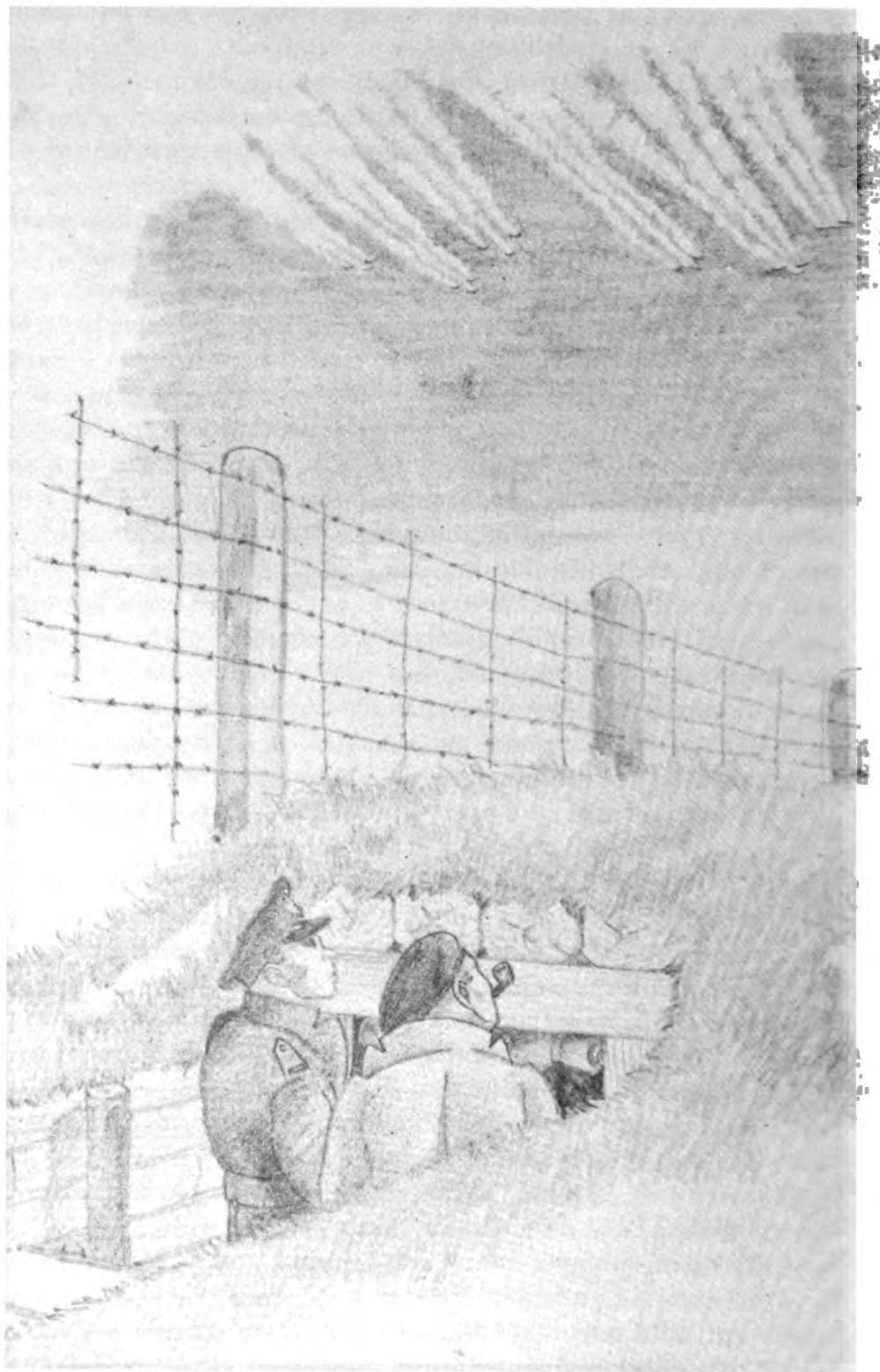
For three quarters of an hour the heavy formations converged on a point to our north, wheeled northeast, and plastered targets somewhere in the north of Berlin. It seemed to us there must have been 500 Fortresses and Liberators altogether. We counted over 300 which passed close enough for identification.

As the bombs struck in thick swarms, the ground even here on the southern edge of the city shook and shuddered. In the northern distance, we could see the great columns of smoke and dust billow up and then stretch out eastward in a heavy pall over the city. We were relatively quiet in Zehlendorf. Only the fighters passed directly over our heads, and the ack-ack they drew was light and very inaccurate.

We don't know much about the damage yet, of course. That will have to wait until some of the guards who live in the northern industrial area have had a chance to contact their homes. But one prisoner, who happened to be in the center of Berlin during the raid, said when he returned this evening there were notices in all subway stations warning of the suspension of all traffic into the battered area.

The almost nightly Mosquito raids do a lot for our morale, just as they do a lot to the Germans. They are nothing compared to a majestic show like this, staged in full daylight and with obvious indifference to the defenses of which Goering once boasted so long and loud. Spirits in the camp jumped a hundred per cent, and as I stood at the mouth of the trench I uttered a brief prayer of thanks to the U.S.A.A.F.—coupled with a fervent hope that General Spaatz would continue to concentrate on north Berlin and leave Zehlendorf West strictly alone.

The big permanent prison camps are all well known, and their



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locations are pinpointed in every bomber war room in England. There is little chance of their becoming involved in a full attack, although accidents can always happen. A two-bit affair like Stalag III-D is another matter entirely. We are in Berlin and we are much too small to be noticed. If the air forces ever find something worth attacking in this area, like the big Mercedez Benz motor factory at Lichterfelde Sued, just down the track from here, this is going to be a very uncomfortable spot indeed.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 6

THERE once were five cats here, all of them good friends of ours because there is salmon, tuna or sardines in every Red Cross parcel and licking the cans is sheer bliss for any Nazi feline.

There are only three cats left this morning. It is quite clear to everyone that no cat—all cats, after all, are very logical beasts with a clear appreciation for the better things in life—would be sucker enough to wander off from a place where the food is as good and frequent as it is around here.

There also were five goldfish in the static water tank. I can find only two this morning, although some reliable watchers report a third hiding fearfully deep in the muck at the bottom.

Suspicion naturally attaches to the Russians, who are automatically accused of everything, and who have been roaring with laughter all day every time they were questioned about the cats and the goldfish. Current latrine rumor, however, points toward a certain Italian—not, I am happy to say, one of the priests—who received a shipment of dry spaghetti and parmesan cheese from Italy two days ago and who is known to have had a gargantuan bowl of *pasta* last night, complete with chunks of meat he never obtained legitimately.

Feldwebel Koenig is furious at the death rate among his pets. His indignation reached a high point at noon, when he made Alex heat thirty gallons of water for the enamel tub in which he bathes each Friday while the rest of his world showers, and had a special bath in solitary state.

All prisoners today were forced to strip their wardrobes to two of each article and turn over the surplus to the authorities, who allegedly will keep it for them.

This new anti-escape measure was bitterly resented by everyone

except myself and the Russians, who consider two of anything the most disgusting sort of luxury.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 8

POLSKI apparently proved a great disappointment to the Germans, as anyone could have told them from the start. When he was taken in for questioning, it developed that they wanted him to train "Polish volunteer parachutists," presumably to fight in Wlassow's army. Polski told them he'd be glad to do so, but that he felt it only proper to warn them that no German would be safe within miles of a lot of Polish parachutists. After that, they decided not to bother questioning him any more.

So Polski was sent elsewhere. He thought it was to a Polish camp, but the Russians, who have a good pipeline into Heimpel's office, say he was put into civilian clothes once he got to Berlin, and presumably sent to a war factory.

In his place we have acquired a variety of prisoners. Some of them, like a French medical corps Captain who has been three times under sentence of death for refusing to treat Germans, and a Rumanian Major from the military mission who adheres to the new regime, were here for only a few days. Two seem to be permanent.

The first to arrive is an ex-boxer of mixed Spanish-French blood who joined de Gaulle in North Africa and ended up as a sergeant in the special parachute brigade. He was picked up in Holland under very suspicious circumstances and the Germans have been of half a mind to shoot him ever since, but he was taken in uniform and that fact has saved him. The boxer has been quartered with Ponti, and beats him over the head whenever he discovers him stealing. This has the wholehearted approval of one and all, German or otherwise, and the parachutist is going to be a very popular fellow. He also turns out to be an amateur shoemaker. He has repaired the soles of my boots, using a couple of discarded Russian shoe uppers and a few matches as pegs. The new soles won't hold more than a couple of weeks, but they are better than nothing.

The second newcomer is a Polish major, a fine, cultured man who escaped to England, was parachuted back into Poland this spring, and finally captured as a member of the staff of General Komorowsky, the famous "Bor" of the Warsaw uprising. He had already spent considerable time at a Polish prisoners camp at Waldensberg, Pommerania.

where he said the officers were fairly decently treated. He had obtained, among other things, four American army shirts, and he made a friend of me for life by giving me one of them.

The Germans asked the major if he would be willing to make a series of broadcasts to the Polish army in western Europe, telling them that the Russians had betrayed Poland in permitting the Germans to massacre the Warsaw patriots. The maor, who has a well-developed sense of humor, told them that he would be delighted if they would just drop a note to the Polish Chief of Staff in London and get his permission. With that, the Germans lost interest in questioning him any farther.

It's not only difficult to discover what purpose the Germans have in sending most of us to this camp in the first place, but why they keep us on here for indefinite periods. Ringelman's sole function is to do a few hours' translation every two weeks, and since he refuses to have anything to do with propaganda, the job is certainly one which could be handled equally well by anyone able to speak both German and English. Nobody has made the slightest attempt to "use" me in any way, and although I am getting no action on letters to Major Heimpel demanding a transfer, I can certainly find no purpose in holding me here. The one thing which worries all of us is the possibility that the Germans will plant ostensible allied prisoners on us in an effort to trap us into something compromising. I know that as far as I'm concerned, everyone who comes into camp gets a pretty careful once-over before I start talking to him very much. The only obvious suspect so far is a big, bulbous Russian whom his compatriots have labelled as a collaborator, probably of Volga German origin. He wanders around the camp grinning at everyone and slapping everyone on the back, but since he speaks no English and has nothing to with us, his activities, if any, are none of our business.

Stalag III-D, Berlin

DECEMBER 10

THE eight weeks I have spent in this crabbed little camp have been among the dullest of my life, but they have been extremely valuable from one point of view. Gradually, by observation, by assimilation of bits of prisoner gossip, and by careful study of the papers, I have built up a true picture of the meaning of allied air power.

A few visionaries, men who had fought for money and research facilities through the lean years of disarmament, grasped long ago what

airpower would mean in a new conflict. Perhaps they over-exaggerated, but that was only natural in champions of a very junior service during a period when even the navies and armies, with all their tradition, could not get the funds to live on. But fundamentally, they were right from start to finish.

I remember how impressed we all were at the start of the war with the huge air weapon which Germany had created, and how, after the Battle of Britain, most of us told ourselves that massed air attack in daylight would never be possible in this war. I remember the arrival of General Carl A. Spaatz and General Ira Eaker in England in 1942. Spaatz was to command the new Eighth Air Force and Eaker was to head its Bomber Command. They were two men with faith in day bombing and a determination to smash Germany in a straight-out battle of plane against plane.

Britain was committed to the night bombing policy which her huge Lancasters, Halifaxes and Stirlings were emblazoning in mass destruction across Europe. Spaatz and Eaker, the men with them, and the men behind them in Washington foresaw that area bombardment by night could never alone cripple Germany's war potential. It would take day pinpoint bombing of vital objectives to do that, and the force which carried out these attacks must be prepared as well to smash the *Luftwaffe* by forcing it to come up and fight and shooting it down in flames.

A great many people said it was impossible. I remember how another correspondent and myself, who considered ourselves friends of General Spaatz, told him of our conviction, based on a layman's observation of the Battle of Britain, that it couldn't be done. I have had good cause to remember, many times since, how Spaatz, who had personally observed German strategy and equipment in the all-out assault on England, replied that the Nazis had gone completely wrong in their concept of air power and had wasted their huge overweight in footling attacks when they might have crushed the R.A.F. and gone on to crush British industry.

The first attack against Hitlers "Fortress Europe," a twelve-plane affair in which Eaker rode as a co-pilot, has grown into the great onslaughts of over 1,000 heavy bombers, escorted all the way by their own fighter cover. The time of heart-wrenching losses and sinking morale which almost wrecked the dream—because of lack of faith elsewhere, not from lack of faith in the men who were doing the job—is long past. The American day bombers have established a sure mastery of the skies over all of Germany, and in them and the massed night raider,

the democracies possess a two-edged weapon for which the Germans have no answer.

The summer campaign in France was a lesson in tactical air power as applied to the combat zone and the communications immediately behind it. To all effect, the Germans became a nineteenth century army inching its way by horse or on foot, short of food, short of ammunition, and gradually starved for weapons. Since I became a prisoner I have come to appreciate, as nobody not on the spot ever could, what incessant strategic bombing has done to the life of Germany itself.

The damage to Berlin, which is typical of more than thirty key cities of Germany, is far worse than anyone could imagine from the thousands of aerial reconnaissance pictures available in England and the United States. I have seen most of the center of the city, the west and southwest quarters, some of the southern section, and outlying areas like Spandau and Doeberitz. It is hopeless to try to specify damage because the devastation is too general to be covered in anything less than an encyclopaedia of doom. Overall, however, a good sixty per cent of these sections of Berlin has been destroyed or rendered useless. The damage runs below this figure in some sections like the Berlin west end or the government quarter, but it runs well above in others like Licherfelde. German guards say that except for the outlying districts in north and east, it is typical of the entire city.

The state of German transportation as I have seen it, even during a period before the full weight of tactical assault has been turned loose, is so desperate that even the weapons which industry manages to produce reach the front only after incredible delays—if they are not destroyed en route. German industry is a stricken giant. The Germans accomplish miracles of reconstruction and improvisation in their efforts to win back production of vital war materials. They say that "soon" they will be completely underground as far as aircraft production is concerned, and that other industries will follow. But meanwhile the allied bombers return again and again to wipe out reconstruction efforts, and the land and air forces are being starved for lack of oil, and even the most optimistic Germans wonder whether it's not already too late even for miracles.

Germans quite frankly say that allied airpower is the single overwhelming factor in the whole military situation, and that without it we never could win the war. Our airpower is an obsession with them. In my opinion, we would win the war with nothing beyond air equality, but at a cost in lives lost and years wasted which would drain the

strength of the world for generations. Without the air equality which it took us three years to achieve, we never could win at all.

Before I reached Berlin, I had crawled at a galling pace over several hundred miles of German territory. It became clear, even through the barbed-wired slit in the side of the box car, that the transportation system was in a state of near-collapse. The railroads were operating at a trickle, where it would take a flood to feed weapons and fuel into the front and essential materials into the war industries. It is common knowledge in Germany that factory after factory which has managed to keep going despite air attack is hamstrung because vital supplies give out one after another. And every German family knows the letters from the front complaining about lack of weapons or shortage of ammunition.

On visual evidence from the box car as we passed the Opel plant at Ruesselsheim and the factories near Ludwigshafen and Mainz, I could imagine what bombs have really done to other industrial areas which I have seen only through air reconnaissance photographs. Such plants could only be put back into operation if they were assured of immunity from new raids timed to wipe out the efforts at reconstruction. Until I saw Berlin, however, I had never comprehended how bombing can strike into a nation's real vitals, the life of the people.

If the Nazis carry out their promise to defend Berlin to the last, the city might just as well be written off for all time. It is enough destroyed at the moment to make the job of rebuilding one for a generation. Street fighting would complete the devastation of the city's heart and make it easier to start a new city somewhere else.

There are huge blank patches everywhere in the city where British blockbusters have blown everything flat for a hundred or two yards in all directions. There is block after block where man-made fire has swept the life from every building, leaving nothing but the raw, scorched walls. Fire which ate the vitals out of their homes and their existences was and is the real terror of every Berliner.

The effectiveness of allied air power is written as well on every face in the subway, on the rubble-blocked sidewalks, or in the queues waiting endlessly for bread, coal or meat. It is there in a grimness and hopelessness so deep-seated that even those who still try to trumpet victory throw the lie to themselves with their own eyes. The Germans will continue to fight because they see no alternative and no longer have the moral courage to make one. But they are hopeless for the future, and air attack is largely responsible.

Air attack has created a deep hatred for the allies, but at the same

time a deep respect—almost, in the Germans, admiration—for this force which now dominates every existence inside the Reich. Speaking as a prisoner who knows what it is to try to beg consideration from the Germans—just a pair of socks or a razor blade—when he is a zero with no power to enforce his demands, I can say that it is exactly what the Germans needed.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 11

MY PERMISSION to take walks outside the camp has suddenly been suspended, without explanation. It may have something to do with certain excursions beyond the woods where we are supposed to get our exercise. Nobody will tell me.

I made the suspension an excuse to request an interview with Major Heimpel, informing him that since the Foreign Office had agreed to my transfer to an officers' camp, there seemed to be no reason for keeping me cooped up at Zehlendorf. Remy, who hates to have anything out of the ordinary to report to Heimpel, grumbled that I'm always sending notes in, but agreed to deliver it. He is very touchy on the subject of notes because Wiethaupt, who is not inclined to take a run-around from the Germans, makes Remy guarantee delivery every time he hands him a letter for the major.

Life stopped for a half hour in camp today while three *Feldwebels* long and angrily investigated a crime against the state whose repercussions, it would seem, can shake the whole German position.

For three weeks or more, there has been a small nail keg set in one corner of the compound where prisoners, who get their potatoes in the skins, are supposed to deposit all peelings. These, along with various other items of refuse from the camp kitchen, are collected two or three times a week by a beefy wench who drives a team of tired horses, and who is known as "The Pig Lady." She carts all the garbage away to her farm somewhere not far from here, and disposes of it to the greater glory of Adolf Hitler.

The potato barrel is sacred because from it will come the strength to feed the piglets to feed the kids who, if the war lasts that long, will get their chance to go out and stop whole tank divisions with a *panzerfaust* and a Sieg Heil for the Fuehrer, as *Der Angriff* says fifteen-year-old Hitler Youths are now doing every day of the week. No other debris may be thrown into it.

Today *Feldwebel* Koenig, who couldn't for the moment find any

cats to play with, was roaming the compound looking for something subversive when he happened to glance into the keg. There, unmistakably, were a lot of ashes and a couple of tin cans with British labels. I, being an innocent promenader on the least muddy stretch of compound, was privileged to watch subsequent developments.

Feldwebel Koenig filled his chest until he towered a good four foot eleven above the puddle in which he was standing at the moment, and bellowed. A *Feldwebel's* bellow is seldom directed at anyone in particular. It is intended to inform everyone within hearing that the bollower is displeased and that somebody had better darned well do some explaining before something pretty awful happens.

In this particular instance, the bellow attracted *Feldwebel* Merkwirth, who had just finished counting his cigar reserve abaft the kitchen, and who, having decided he could afford to smoke another, emerged at a lop with a fine train of smoke behind him. *Feldwebel* Merkwirth observed the desecration of the keg, established in one great cloud of smoke that the kitchen was completely innocent in the matter, and shattered the relative peace of the compound with a bellow of his own which brought out a third *Feldwebel*, whose function is unknown to me, five Italian priests, Ponti, and Nikolai and four Russians who settled down to admire the show. All Germans below the rank of *Feldwebel* prudently pretended not to hear. The only Germans in evidence, in fact, were the guards on the two gates, who clearly wished they were somewhere else.

Borchardt the unhappy still-life painter, who presumably had heard nothing of the commotion, picked this moment to vault out the door of the *Kommando 806* office, neatly clearing the puddle which thrives in front of the stoop. By the time he had reached the keg, it had been established in the minds of the three *Feldwebels* that the fault must lie with the enemy prisoners of *Kommando 806* who (a) had sole access to British canned goods and (b) were unquestionably ill-disposed toward all German pigs. Borchardt, therefore, was morally responsible.

For ten minutes the unfortunate Borchardt took it on the chin as no soldier but a German private or a British guardsman ever has to take it. From the prudent distance which I maintained during the proceedings, I could not make out all the details of the charge sheet, but to the best of my knowledge sabotage ranked low on the list of crimes which had been perpetrated against the national war effort. Borchardt escaped after agreeing that the sanctity of the potato keg would be the subject of a special camp order addressed to *Kommando 806*.

A rapidly growing audience of nearly thirty prisoners watched with



sincere regret as Borchardt sloshed dejectedly back through the puddle into his office. It is moments like this which almost endear the Germans to their non-paying guests.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 17

MAJOR NEWTON R. COLE of West Medway, Massachusetts, who was brought here today from the American officers' camp, Oflag 64, near Posnan, Poland, brought the surprising word that Wright Bryan, who I thought had been retaken at Chaumont within three days of our capture, is at the camp and still suffering from the wound he received September 12. Cole unfortunately does not know the details of Wright's story. He says, however, that his case is typical of many—an essentially simple wound complicated into a chronic ailment because of lack of proper treatment by the Germans.

So much for the promise of the German doctor at Chaumont that Wright would be left behind if the Germans evacuated the town.

Cole, who in civilian life is a chemist with the Walter Baker Chocolate Company, was with the chemical warfare branch when he was captured in Normandy not long after D-Day. He says that experience has taught all American prisoners to threaten the Germans whenever possible if you want to accomplish anything. He advises me to tell Major Heimpel that unless I am sent to Oflag 64 or given a good explanation for my detention here, I will protest direct to the Protecting Power, the Swiss Government. I intend to follow his advice.

Cole says that Colonel Good is now senior American officer at Oflag 64, and that the camp is as comfortable as ingenuity and organization can make it. The prisoners have a library of several thousand volumes, they have organized sports, thanks to equipment from the Y.M.C.A., they have a flourishing amateur theater, an orchestra, and even their own "university" where qualified officers give regular lecture courses.

The camp even has a newspaper founded months ago by Larry Allen of the *Associated Press*, who was captured while serving with the British Mediterranean Fleet and repatriated early this year.

The whole picture makes Stalag III-D look like a pretty cramped, dismal existence, and I am more determined than ever to obtain a transfer or know the reason why.

Strempehl allegedly wanted to see me a few days ago, and I was ready to go into Berlin on short notice. For several hours I was full of high hopes about repatriation before Christmas, but nothing has come of it

and with things as they are in Germany these days, the chances look pretty slim. I have not seen Strempel, and Heimpel says his effort to get me an appointment with him have been futile. I doubt that he has tried very hard.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 21

FOR four days now we have been on edge while the winter offensive in Belgium and Luxembourg developed and the papers screamed victory as they used to in the days when German offensives shook the world. We heard of it first from a highly excited guard, then from Remy, who came in and told us that "now you'll see something—you'll see how Germany defends herself." Since then we have had to rely on the newspapers for information, and from their version the allies are practically cut in half in the west.

Today's editions claim 20,000 prisoners to date, and say the allied dead and wounded run into at least that many more. They also have the first pictures of the columns of prisoners winding back through the wintry forests into captivity. The Germans make a big point of their lack of heavy uniforms and winter overcoats, and the pictures bear this out by showing almost all prisoners in shirts and field jackets. Having had considerable experience ourselves with what happens to prisoners, we all suspect why there are no overcoats in evidence. The average German winter overcoat these days in a very shoddy affair, and GI clothing would be too attractive to resist.

There is little doubt that the offensive made big progress in the first two or three days, but to turn it as the German papers have into a decisive German victory is quite plainly ridiculous. We don't know very much as prisoners, but from what we have seen we are convinced that the Germans simply don't have the reserves to exploit a victory. If the strategy of the offensive comes from the German High Command, it is designed either to relieve pressure in the Saar and Aachen areas or to throw some coming western offensive into confusion. If the strategy is inspired by Hitler's famous intuition and actually aims at some major objective, it probably will fail and the cost may be so heavy that German power is permanently crippled in the west.

However that may be, the German public, which has had almost nothing but bad news since Alamein, has gone in a crescendo of enthusiasm from gloom to over-optimism. The guards, taking their cue

from the newspapers, are talking of "desperation" in England and "outraged public opinion" in the United States.

The effect on the prisoners is an interesting psychological study. The new prisoners, who know how strong the allies are in the west, look on the offensive as, at the worst, a temporary set-back. They ignore all the trumpetings of the Goebbels gang. Old prisoners like the French, who were taken during the days of German invincibility and have heard nothing but Nazi propaganda ever since, are completely depressed. They talk about the break-through in the Ardennes in 1940, and are computing the distance between the Germans and Paris. As far as the Russians are concerned, nothing on the western front matters very much. All of them were taken before the allies landed on the continent and think the Red Army has always done all fighting of any consequence.

My own position is a little peculiar in that although I know how strong we are in the west, I have now spent eleven years under the shadow of Hitler's crazy imperialism. During those eleven years the peace of several hundred million people has depended always on Hitler and no one else, and for over five of them I have seen Germany spread such misery over a continent as even Europe has never seen before. In spite of myself, whenever Hitler makes one of his periodic threats of "retribution," whenever he makes one more promise of total victory, I have a cold moment of fear that perhaps he is going to be right after all. Nobody who has lived under this man can ever hope to feel completely at peace until he is safely underground, hanged or a suicide.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 23

WE SPENT the day in bed today, because it was too cold to attempt to sit around the room. The temperature is close to zero and it's almost impossible to light a match inside the barracks, the drafts are so strong. We have no resistance whatever to cold. Within ten minutes of leaving bed in the morning our feet are like ice, and they never warm up until we climb back into bed again.

Cole, who had been brought here for questioning about new chemical warfare developments and who had a couple of very chilly interviews—on both sides—with a group of German officers, left for Oflag 64 yesterday after giving us all his extras, cigarettes, tobacco, toilet paper and the like. He disappeared on a half hour's notice after informing



Fire-Making: Six Pieces per Day

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Major Heimpel that he had been brought here for three days, that he had already been gone longer than that, and that if he were not back in Poland by Christmas, he would see to it that a protest was made to the Swiss Government.

The Germans don't worry about minor gripes by prisoners but they hate protests delivered through Berne. The Swiss Government, which has a very good reputation among prisoners, transmits these protests to both Washington and Berlin. Someone in authority in Berlin, who probably doesn't care what happens to prisoners, either, becomes annoyed at the inconvenience of investigating the protest, and the annoyance inevitably is taken out on whoever was at fault in the first place.

The Germans have observed Christmas in our case to the extent of issuing us American Red Cross Christmas parcels. At the present moment we are fighting them for recognition of the fact that these are over and above the normal parcels and do not count in the periodic issue. Heimpel refuses to admit this fact, so we shall each be a parcel short.

The Christmas parcels are a wonderful supplement, but they lack certain staple items like sugar, milk, margarine, coffee and chocolate which are essential to the average prisoner. They contain: a one-pound plum pudding, a pound of turkey, small cans of devilled ham, butter, cheese, honey, pineapple jam and preserved cherries, a pound of hard candy, a pound of salted nuts, a pound of dates, three packs of cigarettes, a package of tobacco, a pipe, a washcloth and a couple of pictures for hanging on the bare prison walls.

The German guards are having their Christmas celebration tonight. They will get a roast, several kinds of vegetables, cake, fruit, nuts and candy, plus, no doubt, a lot of speeches for Fuehrer and Fatherland. They are so busy decorating their own quarters and concocting the meal that they had time to prepare for us today only a sort of warm milk soup, some bread and some margarine.

My protests, which now embrace at least ten different items, yielded one minor result. A few minutes ago I was informed I again have permission to walk outside the camp.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 24

THE thermometer dove to below zero today and the water in a pan of washing froze inside the barrack. Fortunately Teudt was free this afternoon and was assigned to take Ringelman, Vaughan and myself for

a walk. We did eight miles, and got as far as Spandau. There was fresh snow in the woods and the sky was gloriously clear. The exercise helped get our minds off Christmas.

The Polish Major, to whom Heimpel refuses a Red Cross parcel, joined us for Christmas dinner, which we decided to stage Christmas Eve. We had beef consomme, devilled ham, turkey, mashed potatoes, toast, jam, cheese, plum pudding, nuts and dates. There were seconds for everyone, and for the first time in weeks I feel stuffed. Each of us had a little gift for the other, and since we had managed a case of beer from the canteen, we could put up a show of celebration.

Thanks to the allied air forces, we had a "Christmas tree." One of the guards smuggled in a branch of evergreen three or four feet long. We nailed this to the wall and decorated it with the thin silver paper strips which are thrown overboard by the millions to confuse enemy radar trying to "fix" an attacking force. We had picked up a lot of the strips in the woods roundabout, and supplemented them with bits of tin foil from German cheese packages.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 25

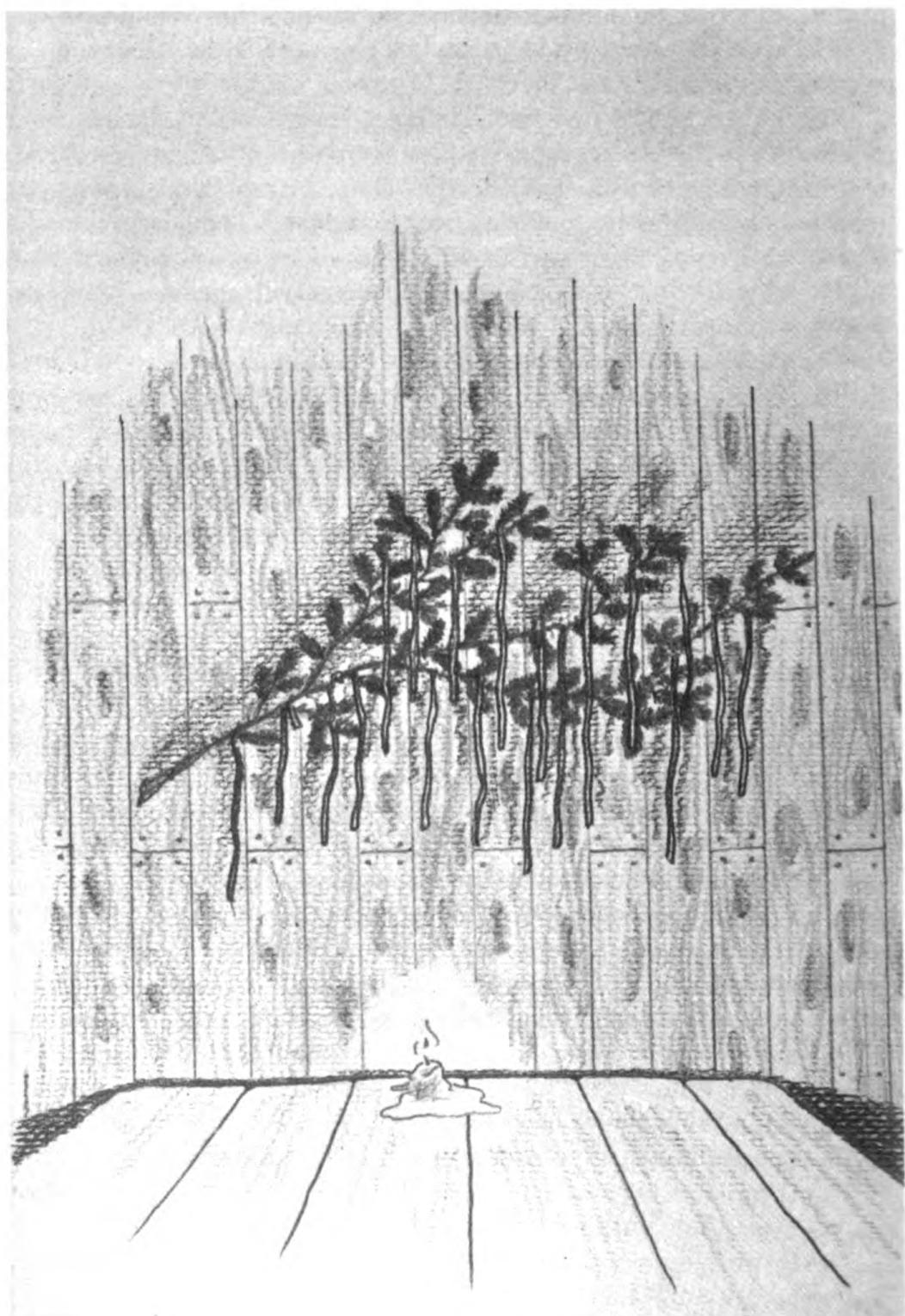
THIS is not a day to dwell on because we are all so depressed we hardly bother to talk, and we are such a small group that we have no facilities for celebration. But there was one item in this Christmas which was as impressive as any holiday ceremony I have ever witnessed.

The Italian priests had obtained permission to celebrate a midnight mass. The Germans, after considerable palaver, agreed to keep the lights turned on until 1:30 A.M. The priests had hung their barrack with blankets to hide the dismal masses of wooden bunks—and to hide as well two sick men who should be in hospital. In one corner they had made a creche out of bits of colored paper, cellophane, grass and branches. On a couple of mess tables they had erected their altar, covered with altar cloths they had been allowed to keep when captured.

The chaplains who officiated had their field vestments. Everyone else wore his "best" uniform.

There were only eight or ten in the congregation, including three of us who are Protestant. They ranged from the Polish major, from whom we Protestants took our cues, to Ponti, who clearly didn't know the ritual but who seemed as deeply moved as anyone.

Eight chaplains who formed the choir had been practising for



Christmas, 1944

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Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

weeks for the Christmas festival. As the choir sang the majestic "Adeste Fidelis" the door opened and a lone German soldier sidled into the room and tiptoed to the corner. He looked very forlorn.

I have heard the Christmas high mass in some of Europe's greatest cathedrals. I have never heard it as movingly sung as by this group of simple priests in the squalor of a Nazi prison camp.

This is my twelfth consecutive Christmas away from home. Four of them were spent in Berlin, three in London, and one each in Copenhagen, Lisbon, Shanghai and Addis Ababa. Never had I spent one before without at least one or two close friends. Never can I imagine spending one again under such dismal conditions.

The cold was intense all day, and finally the kitchen *Feldwebel*, full of the spirit of the holiday, furnished us with enough old potato sacks to stuff up the crevasses in our walls. By evening, thanks to some stolen coal, we had the room warm for the first time in ten days or more. The Germans, who had observed Christmas Eve yesterday by issuing us with a "meal" of carrot soup, bread and margarine, gave us gruel and bread today. The idea presumably is to impress prisoners with their proper importance in the scheme of things. We all hope the German prisoners in the United States are enjoying their turkey.

Rumor seeping in from outside has it that the German spearheads in the Ardennes are finally surrounded, and that the winter offensive may end in complete disaster. If so, it might be as important to the Battle of Germany as was the debacle which followed the Mortain-Vire counteroffensive by von Kluge during the Battle of France. That attack was dictated by Hitler's personal ego: it seems as though this may have been the same sort of thing.

The Germans admit that the Russians have broken into Budapest. News like that is much more important to us than the dismal Christmas we have spent. Nothing matters except release.

I tried to write home tonight to describe my feelings today, and finally gave it up as impossible. The letter probably would not have arrived, in any event. None of us has much hope that the Germans ever send out the mail.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
DECEMBER 26

IT WAS so cold last night that our bread froze inside the room, but thanks to our weatherproofing job of yesterday, we had the place habitable about an hour after waking up. There was an ice storm during

the night and the countryside was very beautiful this afternoon when they let us out for a walk, but none of us has any stomach for cold these days and we'd settle for a coral atoll, as long as it was hot.

One of the Italians heard second-hand tonight that the B.B.C. had claimed the practical surrounding of 190,000 Germans in the west. If this is true Hitler may have delayed our own attack but he certainly has sacrificed the reserves which might have been used to stop it.

Something has very clearly gone wrong with the offensive in the west. The German communique no longer talks about "our advancing troops" but speaks of "bitter defensive fighting against attacking forces of the enemy." The German people, who have grown very sensitive to the wording of the communique, are deep in their habitual glumness again, and nobody bothers with the victory talk which was so common just before Christmas. At a guess, the brief flare-up of optimism in the week before the holiday will be Germany's last for many years to come.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
JANUARY 1

THE Germans always have celebrated New Year's Eve with fireworks. The fireworks were supplied last night courtesy of the R.A.F.

The raid was far and away the heaviest night effort we had seen. As we stood in the mouth of our trench and watched the display, it seemed to us that several hundred planes were involved. They concentrated on Spandau or one of the northern suburbs close to it, and the sky was aflame for an hour with blockbusters, incendiary clusters, and the bursts of the photo-flash bombs and "christmas tree" flares.

Prisoners certainly exaggerate anything of this sort and the raid probably wasn't nearly as heavy as we thought, but it certainly was well over the normal Mosquito strength and it shook the guards considerably.

One guard, standing on watch by our trench, remarked:

"And so starts the blackest year in German history."

I celebrated New Year's today with a highly indignant letter to Major Heimpel telling him I insist on an interview with either himself or Stremper. I don't imagine the major will do anything about it, but at least I feel a lot better.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
JANUARY 12

THIS entry is being written in a state of complete puzzlement. I have just returned from a junket to Berlin in which I was guest of honor at a purely social occasion. There is no other explanation for it.

I was told this morning to prepare for another interview, and promptly went wildly hopeful over the possibilities of exchange. Unfortunately it was not as good as all that.

The guard, the sympathetic Herr Liepe, took me into the center of town by a route we hadn't been able to cover before, and eventually deposited me at the emergency headquarters of the German Press Club off the Friedrichstrasse, a comparatively undamaged building in the midst of complete devastation. I was ushered into a small room, and there found three old acquaintances waiting for me.

The first, who apparently had been rung in on the party because he could ask for a chance to interrogate me, was a certain *Ministerialrat* Stefan, a henchman of Reich Press Chief Dietrich. The others, both of whom I had known well, were August Halfeld, diplomatic correspondent of the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, and Erich Schneyder, editor of the *Transocean News Agency*.

The three were provided with Rhine wine, champagne and brandy. They assured me at the start that there was no purpose to the gathering beyond a desire to buy me a drink, of which they felt I might be in need. In point of fact, nobody in prison seriously misses alcohol. The average prisoner can go weeks or even months without even thinking of it, whereas a day without tobacco puts him in savage temper. The average prisoner however, never refuses a drink offered by a German.

Like everyone else in Germany, both Schneyder and Halfeld were interested chiefly in the postwar world. Although they carefully skirted the subject of German defeat, it was quite clear they accepted it as a foregone conclusion. I was interested in getting a German newspaperman's reaction to the strange fatalism which prompts Germans who are bitterly antiCommunist to accept Communism as the inevitable result of defeat.

"Perhaps we won't go Communist," Schneyder admitted, "but if I have my way we'll certainly play Russia off against Britain and America and milk both sides for everything they're worth."

I told him it struck me as strange that all Germans seemed to look

on Russia on the one hand and the western powers on the other as two "sides" whose antagonism could be played up to Germany's advantage. I said the Germans should have learned by this time that it was impossible to get a compromise peace by working on this "antagonism" and should at least consider the possibility that the allies would be united in the peace as well.

Both Schneyder and Halfeld laughed the idea off. Partly because they are convinced that we basically prefer them to the Russians, and partly because their own propaganda has so magnified every minor difference between Russia and the western powers, all Germans are convinced that a serious rift exists, and they will probably continue to believe in it until the allied armies meet in the middle of Berlin.

I tried to argue that despite obvious differences on policy, both "sides" were quite clear that this time the great powers must cooperate to preserve peace, and that Russia to date had given every evidence of the desire to work toward that end.

"With or without us, you'll be fighting them within fifteen years," Halfeld said. "And it will be a lot easier if you have us on your side."

Both men said that a Russian winter offensive is expected at any moment. They affected to be sure that the Germans could stop it well short of the Oder, which would be the last desperate defense line before Berlin. They repeated the old arguments about the Russians being overextended, about the inferiority of the individual Russian as a soldier, and about the "fanatic will of the whole people" to halt them short of the old Reich border, but I thought they were not too confident in their own minds.

Some reference was made to the fact that the destruction of the entire area around the press club building had come from a single American day raid in late June of last year. I remembered sitting at air headquarters as various bases telephoned in their reports on this raid, in which around 800 Fortresses and Liberators had been turned loose on the center of Berlin. I told my hosts that that particular raid had been a direct answer to the indiscriminate bombardment of London with flying bombs, and that from what I had seen of flying bomb damage in London, Berlin had suffered twice the devastation in one one-hour attack. They agreed that V-I, at the time it was put into operation, could never have had more than a nuisance effect. They explained that without allied bombing, particularly the raid on the research center at Peenemuende, Germany would have been much farther along on her entire "V weapon" campaign and could have

struck much heavier blows much earlier, when they might have been effective.

As the guard and I groped our way out into the slush and the black-out, I felt almost as though I were back in the prewar days when Schneyder and Halfeld used to argue by the hour in the old *Taverne* with British and American correspondents—and used to bet them on the ease with which Hitler would win the war.

Then I stumbled into a rubble pile on the sidewalk, ripping off one of the emergency soles the French parachutist had pegged on, the icy water began pouring into my shoe, and I was a prisoner again.

Stalag III-D, Berlin

JANUARY 13

THE RUSSIAN winter offensive has begun. We know no more about it than the bare fact, which the Germans released today, but think it's significant that the High Command speaks of "heavy defensive fighting" everywhere and makes no claims to have halted the drive.

In the next compound there are sounds of singing and dancing tonight, and the Germans are making no effort to stop it. The Russians make their own fire-water from stolen potatoes, sugar and other ingredients, and always seem to keep enough in stock to take care of special occasions like this. Even those who believe the German propaganda that Stalin will shoot every Russian who permitted himself to be captured, seem to respond to an occasion like this.

Of more immediate importance to myself, I finally was issued today with a pair of hobnailed British army boots, unworn and water-tight. They had been available all along, and Major Heimpel could have given me them at any time during the past twelve weeks. I got them today only because a British prisoner who was in the office on business took the trouble to wheedle them out of the Major, and happened to catch him in an expansive mood.

Stalag III-D, Berlin

JANUARY 14

SEVERAL hundred American heavy bombers delivered a smashing attack at around noon today against some target to the south of us, probably the arms center of Zossen.

We could see the big formations coming in below us, and for a time

expected them suddenly to swing northeast and drive in on Berlin directly overhead. For weeks we have been expecting the center of attack on the capital to shift to the southern part of the city, which would probably involve Zehlendorf, and the prospect has not been pleasant. Instead, however, the bombers suddenly wheeled away from Berlin, and a few moments later began the long roll of bomb-bursts. They must have scored direct hits on an ammunition depot, because at least an hour later, long after the last formations had swung back into the west, the explosions were still rumbling in the distance.

The Germans are extremely cautious about claiming successes in stopping the winter offensive in the east. In fact they are talking today about the huge masses thrown into the storm by the Red Army, and the result has been a panicky sort of mood among the few Germans I have seen. The whole camp is in a state of high excitement. If the Russians scored a complete breakthrough, they might well reach Berlin in this surge. That would mean our liberation or a forced move west toward the British and Americans. Either would be a change for the better.

The chances of my ever reaching Oflag 64 have certainly gone a-glimmer. Unless the Russians are stopped cold, the Posen-Bromberg area, in which it is located, will shortly be a primary battle area and certainly no new prisoners will be sent there. There is talk, however, of the establishment of a new American officers' camp to handle the prisoners from the Ardennes offensive, and I might end up with them. I have written a final letter to Heimpel in which I was as insulting as I dared be. I told him my next move would be a direct protest to Berne, and that I would see to it the letter reached the Swiss Legation in Berlin.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
JANUARY 19

WE NOW have four British noncoms to add to the English-speaking contingent. Three of them are relics of Dunkirk. The fourth, Ian MacLean, who was taken near Medjez el Bab in Tunisia, is a former newspaperman who has been functioning in prison as editor of "The Camp," the weekly paper published for British kriegies. MacLean and his friends all have been kept at the so-called "holiday camp" at Genshagen, thirty miles from here, where old-time prisoners are sent for two or three weeks relaxation under better-than-normal conditions. The camp has just been disbanded, and the four of them made away with

considerable equipment, including a portable phonograph and a couple of dozen records.

Like most old prisoners, they are well equipped with clothes, and I have inherited a couple of pair of socks, a balaclava helmet and a woolen jersey. The balaclava is very valuable at night, when the barracks is so cold that without head covering, you must choose between freezing nose and ears or diving under the blankets at the sacrifice of all air.

MacLean's editorial job takes him into Berlin three times a week or so and gives him a certain amount of contact with the Foreign Office, which supervises the paper. He says there are rumors around the Foreign Office that the Germans have made serious efforts to contact the Russians in Stockholm, thus far without success.

At the rate of progress of the winter offensive, the Russians would be mad to think of anything short of complete victory. The assault has smashed the Germans everywhere, and although the Germans talk of tank groups "heroically stemming the attack" back along the upper Vistula, it is quite obvious from the map that these units are completely cut off and will sooner or later be annihilated.

Today, when the German High Command communique is forced to admit the loss of Cracow, Lodz, Kutno and a dozen other places in Poland, as well as two-thirds of Budapest, the *Angriff* still dares make its main headline "German Offensive Success in Hungary." Somewhere deep in the text, the communique does mention a local counterattack which drove back the Russians along a narrow sector.

Even the guards are snorting about that headline. They have finally become so distrustful of Nazi propaganda that they hardly believe the communique, which is usually accurate geographically, although it leaves a lot unsaid.

The communique has conveniently dropped all reference to the debacle in the Ardennes. The Germans have heard of the disaster only through the grapevine or by listening to foreign broadcasts, but word of it is very widely spread. Even Remy, who normally refuses to recognize anything but good news, admits that the losses were very heavy. The kitchen *Feldwebel*, whose morale has gone completely to the dogs during the past week, goes around proclaiming that Germany is "befouled" and hoping that his prisoner son will be permitted to stay in the United States after the war.

Stalag III-D, Berlin
JANUARY 22

THE Russian offensive now is thundering down on Koenigsberg, Posen, Breslau and Gleiwitz, and even the German High Command makes no claims to halting it anywhere along the line.

Normally, the communique uses expressions like "*Abriegelung des Angriffs*"—sealing off the attack—or "*im Tiefe des Hauptkampffeldes aufgenfangen*"—caught up in the depths of the battle zone—to gloss over serious enemy penetrations by pretending they have been halted. Perhaps in recognition of the fact that the public no longer believes these expressions anyway, the High Command today simply states the bald facts of the tremendous Russian gains and leaves the public to supply its own interpretation.

The public is interpreting the news at its worst, and for the first time I can see real signs of panic in the people outside camp.

I notice it in increased crowds in the stores, bent on buying everything which might represent real values during a collapse. I sense it in groups on the street corners who talk in low voices. I feel it most strongly on the suburban train platforms where people just out from Berlin describe to their friends the mass of freezing, starving refugees pouring into the city from the east.

Everyone now knows that the roads from Poland and Silesia are a jam of suffering humanity. Men, women and children by the tens of thousands are swept along in a panic-stricken march of hunger, cold and despair, moving hopelessly out of the East toward some insecure haven in the battered heart of Germany. They have left behind everything they could not carry, and their trail is littered with belongings which became too heavy to carry farther. They are dying by the hundreds, and thousands of them are diseased. But they are driven on by a fear so inflamed by Nazi words that anything seems better than Russian occupation. As they go, they storm the food shops for the few scraps they have. They fight their way onto anything that moves on the roads or railways. Mixed with them, it is said, are thousands of soldiers from smashed divisions. For the first time we now hear talk of big-scale desertion.

Even Zehlendorf is getting the impact of the panic-crazed refugee horde. A highway workers camp a couple of miles from here has been thrown open for several thousand of them. They are living under conditions even worse than ours: the authorities are overwhelmed by the



Prisoners can be divided into two schools—the go-getters, or let's-have-a-real-blowouters, who believe in eating hearty and to hell with next week, and the dainty eaters, or look-before-you-leapers, who believe in making things last and who spend hours spreading films of jam and peanut butter on wisps of bread.

disaster and can't hope to keep abreast of the need for food, clothing, bedding and medical relief.

Yesterday at Zehlendorf station there were at least fifty families from East Prussia camped on the platform. They were loaded with bundles and bags and pots and baskets. Despite the layers of winter clothing, they were obviously half frozen from their journey. They had come out of nowhere, and there was nowhere for them to go. Nobody around the station could tell them where to find shelter. When the station master informed them they could not stay on the platform, they refused to move and challenged him to force them. And as darkness fell they were still huddled on the unprotected platform, waiting out another night with the same dull, hopeless look on their faces which had been stamped for five years on the faces of tens of millions of refugees from German military conquest.

Nobody can see that refugee look without feeling pity and frustration. It is as moving on the face of a German, I suppose, as on the face of a Chinaman or a Pole or a Belgian or a Frenchman. I tried to tell myself that these Germans were responsible for the war, that they still had no feeling of guilt about it, and that they still lacked the moral courage to put an end to the disaster. It didn't work. You can't remain bitter in the face of that refugee look.

Unless this drive is checked within the next week or two, everything will be over for Germany. Even a check will mean only a few weeks' respite. The Germans are already close to the point, physically and geographically, where further resistance is an invitation to massacre. They are about to lose Silesia, second only to the Ruhr as a center of war production. The Ruhr itself is at least half neutralized. With all the will in the world, there just won't be the weapons a short time from now to continue the senseless fight.

From now on, the fight is nothing but a fantastic tribute in blood to the mad demigod Hitler. Hitler is leading the German people not into the *Goetterdaemmerung* of their Wotan legend but into a national chaos so profound that it will multiply the world's misery for generations. And all to gain a few more weeks of life for a few thousand responsible Nazis whose lives are forfeit in any event and who might at least spare the people they claimed to love so much.

The guards are grumbling openly, and only a handful make even a pretense at the old blind faith that Hitler will turn the tide. Millions of Germans must feel the same way but they are incapable, by mentality and because of their political conditioning, to force the regime to call quits.

I talked a couple of days ago on the subway to a German major who was just back from the eastern front. His unit had been obliterated and he had been called back to Berlin "for conferences," he said. He admitted, surprisingly, what I had suspected before—the overpropagandizing of "the Russian menace."

He said the Nazis had so emphasized the "subhuman" aspect of the Red Army, the rape, the looting, the murder and the sheer destruction, that whole army units sometimes joined the civilian population in panicky flight on the roads rather than face hand-to-hand combat with the Russians. He admitted that in some sectors there had been "stam-pedes" by whole regiments, then divisions, which had been ordered to stand firm.

"Most of the army still fights like so many fiends against the Russians," he said, "but we can no longer be absolutely sure of its temper."

Stalag III-D, Berlin
JANUARY 24

I AM leaving this camp tomorrow, either for exchange or for transfer elsewhere. Because there is to be an exchange of several hundred prisoners at Lake Constance the day after tomorrow, Ringelman and the others are convinced I will be included, and I have messages from everyone to be cabled when I reach the first telegraph office on the allied side of the lines.

I am trying to hold down my own wild hopes. It seems to me that if I were to be exchanged, either von Stremper or Schmidt would have had me in to Berlin for one last interview. Schmidt, certainly, would never have missed the chance to sound off once more for the good of my soul. Well, I'll know one way or another inside twenty-four hours.

Whether it's exchange or transfer, this will be my last sight of Berlin. In another few weeks the war will be over and this city of gloom will have capitulated or have completed its self-destruction in one last battle. Already it is getting the feel of the battle zone. Rations of all kinds are short, and fuel is even scarcer. From today, gas will be provided only in those buildings which have no other cooking facilities. The guards say that within a couple of weeks both gas and electricity will be cut to a few hours a day.

The station platform at Zehlendorf yesterday was crowded with men of the local *Volkssturm*, "armed" and "equipped" for the front east of Berlin. Their arms consisted of spades and a few worldwar bayo-

nets. Their equipment consisted of their heaviest clothes and boots, blanket rolls, packages of sandwiches and bottles of *ersatz* coffee. The oldest man was well over sixty, and the youngest boy looked about thirteen. None of them knew where they were going, whether they were simply to dig tank traps out beyond the city or whether they were to be thrown into the line. None of them knew where, if at all, they were to get arms and uniforms. They looked cold, helpless and utterly hopeless.

The camp itself seems about to dissolve. Remy has been ordered to active duty somewhere in the west. Schmidt, the cook, is to be "given the chance to lose a few more fingers," as he puts it. Several of the Italians have been taken off, and a lot of Russians have disappeared. Within a few days, it seems likely, all the prisoners will have been sent elsewhere. I don't envy any of them who are kept in Berlin for the siege.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 1

EASTER, and what a day for hopes. For the 17,000 men of all nations who have frozen and starved all winter in this limbo of dead dreams it is really a day of resurrection—spiritual if it can not yet be physical.

In the more than two months between the confiscation of this diary in Berlin and its reappearance yesterday the war in Europe has been won beyond all question. The nightmare of those two months is fading in the certainty that within two weeks or three we shall be free.

The Russians are held along the Oder, almost within cannon shot of Luckenwalde to the east, but we know and so do the Germans that it is only for the moment. To the west, the British are cutting off Northwest Germany and the Americans are coming across Germany with such rush and such power that even the Germans are agape with reluctant admiration.

The Germans at the camp are just going through the motions of guard mount. Some of them already wear civilian clothes underneath their shabby uniforms. There is no hope ahead for them. The prisoners, caught up for the most part out of the wreckage of the eastern Nazi empire and herded here into great pens in mediaeval conditions of filth, have the dark time behind them, and only hope ahead.

When I left Berlin on January 25, morale had reached its lowest point of the war. The forlorn *Volkssturm* graybeards on the platform of Zehlendorf station were typical of the gloom which had fallen on the

city. At Potsdamer station, where we arrived in Berlin, and at Anhalter station, where we departed, there were thousands of hopeless refugees, screaming, shoving, and crowding their way to the emergency soup kitchens, to the toilets, to the waiting rooms and above all to trains which might carry them farther away from the Russians. They had arrived by every known means of transportation, and wanted only to go on.

These people know how surely the war in the east was lost, even though the Berliners themselves might not. They were stripped of everything but their lives. They wanted a stop to war, and many of them, particularly the women, were making no secret of it as they tried to fight their way into trains already packed beyond endurance.

Teudt, who took me in as far as camp headquarters, left for a half hour or so while Heimpel received me and told me how sorry he was that I could not yet be exchanged, but how I would find the men from Oflag 64 at Luckenwalde. A noncom searched me to the skin, to the innermost end of a roll of toilet paper, and confiscated my diary and sketches. When Teudt came back he said the people outside were talking of a food riot that morning in which the refugees, maddened by the nightmare of hunger and cold, had stormed a depot and been fired on by the SS.

The guards who took me on to Luckenwalde were both close to sixty, and one of them was outspoken. The train in which we traveled was so crowded that he didn't dare talk much, but when he had the chance he told me that Berlin was finally losing hold on itself, and that a few more days of tension would snap the city's morale.

We literally barricaded ourselves in the train for Luckenwalde while people by the hundred battered on the doors outside and told us they had more right to travel than we. The jam in my compartment included a wounded soldier and his wife, two ex-soldiers invalidated out of the war, an SS colonel on a business trip and two American fliers just caught by the Germans.

Nobody encouraged conversation between myself and the two other prisoners: the crowd, in fact, obviously resented the English we spoke. But we managed to identify ourselves to each other. They had been shot down over Slovakia in a Liberator, had spent twenty-nine days in the high mountains, sleeping in caves and drinking snow water, dependent on the generosity of the peasants. They had surrendered within three miles of the Russian lines because their flying clothes had frozen stiff and they no longer had strength to walk. And they had been blaming themselves ever since for not knowing that they were so close to the

Russian outposts. I had their names when I reached Luckenwalde, but they were taken from me. I'd like to remember two people with the kind of courage they had.

The three of us ate some of my bread and cheese and smoked a couple of cigarettes. Finally one of my guards told me we'd better break up the conversation. As we pulled into Luckenwalde, thirty-five miles south of Berlin, the SS major, who had been holding forth optimistically for the benefit of the compartment, said to me in English:

"You three need not worry much. You're about to end your trials. We are just about to start on ours."

That was the atmosphere of the train. I've often wondered what ever became of the two or three thousand souls it carried south away from Berlin.

Central Germany that day was inevitably panic-stricken along with the refugee thousands with their tales of cold, hunger, and the Russian tank columns which were cutting Silesia to ribbons and driving the routed *Wehrmacht* back to the Oder. When the Russian offensive finally slowed at the river, still short of Frankfurt, Goerlitz and Kottbus, many of these same Germans managed to fool themselves once more. They began talking again of the "exhausted" Red Army, and of how the western front would hold against the storm of British and Americans. A few even managed to think of victory.

All that has been blasted to shreds by the debacle on the west bank of the Rhine and the allied surge forward since the main crossings began.

The fighting has been reduced by now to one last desperate flurry by the Nazi leadership, and the Germans themselves know it. The Nazis apparently still hope blindly for some sort of compromise with the western powers, failing which they will at least have prolonged their own miserable lives for a few weeks longer. Either way, the German people have nothing to gain.

The people deserve better of their leaders for the steadfastness with which they have stood behind them under conditions no modern nation has ever faced before. For two and a half years of disaster, now, the people have kept faith alive. There has been no let-up to the steady pounding of air raids, to the bad food and the bad news except for the phoney flurries of optimism over V-I and V-II.

To some extent, this steadfastness sprang from the devouring fear of "Bolshevism," the mass hypnotism with the impending Communist chaos, which the Nazis have managed to invoke. Chiefly, however, it comes from the patriotism of a highly-developed people which could

get no promise of clemency from its enemies and which managed somehow to adapt itself to each new calamity. In these last few weeks, at least, it draws strength from the strange, mystic streak in each German which glorifies martyrdom—which turns each new disaster into a sort of dismal festival. Hitler, I have always imagined, pictures himself as ending on Siegfried's funeral pyre. That pyre now threatens to consume a nation.

For the most part the German people have been behind the government. In recent months more and more of them have realized they were being led into chaos. But because the allies would offer them only unconditional surrender and because Nazi propaganda made this mean "surrender to Bolshevism," they fought on.

They have long since ceased believing the papers or radio. The guards here get their news from us, and make no pretense of interest as to whether it comes from the German communique or the British Broadcasting Corporation, to which we listen regularly on contraband radio sets. The German communique is still accurate geographically, but it is filled with verbal evasions which are so well known by now that everyone at once discounts them. Germans automatically put the worst possible construction on everything the communique says. If it admits that American troops have fought their way into a given town, the Germans automatically write off the town as captured, even though fighting may go on for days. If the communique says Patton's Third Army made thirty miles up to yesterday, Germans automatically assume it is a minimum of thirty miles farther east today.

Despite all the disillusionment, Germans believed in the war up to two or three weeks ago and hoped desperately that some new weapon or some new hidden force would be brought into play which might turn disaster into victory, or at least force a compromise peace. They knew enough—even I, as a prisoner, had heard enough—of swarms of jet-propelled planes, of underground rocket factories, even of atomic bombs, to feel that a few months might find Germany in a position to strike terrible blows against her enemies. What they did not realize was that allied ground and air power—and of the two, I think air power rates the number one position—had not left them those months.

The morale which had held up for five and a half years has now collapsed. I have talked to enough guards, enough civilians, enough army officers and enough Nazis to know that for certain. The average German has had five and a half years of the dullest, grayest existence in Europe, short of the mass murder areas which Nazi vindictiveness

created. He has made innumerable sacrifices only to discover that times infinitely worse lie ahead.

Today he hears not only the allied planes, which he knows can search him out anywhere in Hitler's inviolable Reich. He can hear the mutter of the guns, and knows that any hour he may be within their reach. He can see the roads jammed with refugees driving blindly into the hopeless sanctuary of central Germany, into a national chaos which is worse than the battle zone itself.

He can watch foreign slave labor in its millions daily becoming more truculent, and fears what will happen to him when slave labor finally rises—to him who a few months ago was inspecting women prisoners paraded naked, like so many horses, to select the healthiest or the least unhealthy to work for the glory of Hitler.

He knows that the rationing system has broken down completely, that each area has been left to feed itself as best it can, that livestock has been ordered slaughtered by today to save it from the invaders. He knows that Germany's inadequate fields are not being sown this spring, and that in any event there would be no slave labor this August to take in the vital harvest.

He knows that the great coal producing areas are gone and that the Ruhr, the last mass producer of war tools, is about to crash in ruins. He can see nothing ahead but the hunger, cold and misery which inevitably will scourge the *Vaterland*.

Finally, at long last, he has ceased paying even lip service to the Nazis. He is no longer behind the government in its pursuit of a hopeless war. He wants only the chance to construct what life he can for himself—just the bare chance to exist for himself and his family.

He hates Hitler and condemns him bitterly, not because Hitler plunged Europe into chaos, not because he trampled over a dozen "inferior" nations or because he ordered the mass destruction of millions of human beings, but purely and simply because Hitler, who told the average German he was of the *Herrenvolk* and gave him the dream of world domination, has failed to bring it about. It's because Hitler is a failure—not because of the blood on his hands and with his, on the nations—that the average German today rejects him and his works.

Some nations would do something about it. Even a Nazi dictatorship can no longer function when it is deprived of all support and when the people refuse to go farther. But the average German has become so apathetic under the Nazis, his civic imagination and his moral courage have been so shrivelled by the hot blast of propaganda, and his potential leaders have been so thoroughly liquidated or per-

verted, that there is no chance of a popular movement to end this mass suicide.

The men who might rally such a movement are even now no more, certainly, than a fraction of the fanatics who still intend to fight to the last man, who still snipe from the woods behind the allied advance, who months hence will still plan sabotage against the victors and who still years from now will be carrying on underground in the name of a lost cause and the falsest prophet in history. And the bulk of the population is utterly apathetic.

Germans desperately want the western powers to occupy the entire Reich before the Russians can do so, because they do not fear the British and Americans and hope their regime might provide a reasonably decent existence. But there they stop. There is no organization to their hopes: the Nazis killed its seeds. Therein lies the danger that Germany in defeat will sink into formless chaos. It seems probable that unless some military group cuts free from the Nazis and strikes the flag, fighting will continue for weeks or even months in southern Germany. And as the allied armies knife deeper and deeper into the country, one province after another will disintegrate socially, morally and economically unless an agency rises which can give life some sort of form.

Since the underground Nazis alone would keep their "integrity" in such a chaos, the prospect would be alarming. They might be forced in defeat to call it by some other name than Nazi, and the old discredited leaders would have no appeal to the nation, but there is little doubt that the old program would have the same attractions to the German nation, and that the fanatical minority could dictate the political tone for the dull, formless majority.

The Nazis, or whatever they called themselves, would reestablish their "Vehm" courts as the arch nationalists did after the last war, and no group in the population would possess the bone to withstand the "Vehm," whose dreaded hooded tribunals terrorized the Germany of the Middle Ages. Yesterday's *Voelkischer Beobachter* clearly told the Nazis to use it again in this crisis.

The paper, chief mouthpiece of the Nazi party, carried a short story on the murder of one Max Oppenhof, appointed Mayor of Aachen by the American occupying forces, at the hands of "unknown fighters for freedom." The paper described it as an execution carried out because Oppenhof had collaborated with the enemy.

"A court established to protect German honor condemned the faithless traitor to death immediately after his entry into office in the pay of the hated enemy," the *Voelkischer Beobachter* continued. "The

sentence has now been executed. . . . Whoever brands himself traitor shall be forever cast from the community of the people. The whole German people, at the fighting front or tirelessly laboring at home, demands the execution of sentence on all honorless traitors, and they shall be found out, no matter where they may crawl for sanctuary."

It will be years before the victor powers can be sure how deep are the roots of such things. Years during which the beaten population may appease or fawn, while the spirit of the "Vehm" goes about its secret work.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 2

TODAY I am going to try to describe this incredible camp of 17,000 men of all nations which sprouted from the bleak Jueterbog Heath as a by-product of German chaos. Words cannot describe it—words, for instance, could never render the smells of Luckenwalde, a compound of latrine, rotten cabbage, dirty bodies and decay—but the part which can be put into words is bad enough.

I could have done a better job if I had continued in a new diary, day by day, after the original was confiscated in Berlin January 25. I didn't, partly because the confiscation discouraged me, and partly because for the first six weeks here at Luckenwalde, conditions were so bad that nobody had the energy for much beyond the mechanics of eating and sleeping.

I never expected to see my original diary again. That I did, can be thanked, I imagine, to the disbandment of Stalag III-D a few days after my transfer. The III-D authorities, who had promised to send on the book after censoring it, did so without censorship. The III-A authorities assumed it had already been read, and I succeeded in persuading a friendly German who told me it had arrived, to give it to me before anyone here had had time to leaf through it again.

The words will never do justice to Luckenwalde. But they will give a bare outline for future reference, and that will be enough for me or anyone else who has spent this winter here. Nobody who was not here could ever fully appreciate what Luckenwalde was like, anyway.

There are Russians, Frenchmen, Poles, Norwegians, Serbs, Italians, Greeks, Rumanians, Americans and men from all parts of the British Empire existing here, hungry, ragged, dirty, lice-infested and sick. Over half of them are here thanks to the fact that the Nazis are constitutionally incapable of releasing their grip on anything they hold.

It was this trait which kept the armies at Stalingrad and Alamein when every professional soldier knew it invited disaster, and which caused Hitler to order the defense of France out at the coast, when he might have been able to hold on a short line farther inland. And this trait dictated that in the bitter cold of January, when the Russians were pouring through the breaches in the Polish front, these thousands of men should be uprooted from their permanent camps and herded across the wind-whipped plains of eastern Germany to be dumped into the limbo of Luckenwalde.

They were marched by day over the bitter refugee roads in the great army of the homeless which swept westward looking for safety in the crumbling Reich. By night they were herded into barns and haystacks for a few hours of frozen sleep. At the best, when they were on the point of collapse, they were jammed into unheated boxcars or flatcars without covers and cast adrift on the battered German railroads. Seldom were they given food: they lived on what they could trade from the country people with their Red Cross coffee, soap, chocolate and cigarettes.

There was no rational reason for moving the tens of thousands of prisoners out of the east to the dozen or two camps where the survivors have been penned up ever since. In their old camps, they would have been overrun by the Russians and in due course shipped back home to recuperate. In their new camps, they are just so many more mouths to feed, and even the starvation diet which the Germans grudgingly give their prisoners in this year of grace is a strain on a beaten nation. But Hitler and Himmler, who now is in charge of prisoners, decreed that they be held, perhaps as hostages in one final desperate bid for a deal. And camps like Luckenwalde, where a few thousand French and Russians had been "living" in barracks which are giant hovels, suddenly became great, bloated bedlamas in which many thousands were left to exist as best they could.

Stalag III-A at Luckenwalde, a market town thirty-five miles south of Berlin, had a bad name as a punishment camp even before the influx from the east. A little German-French phrase book issued to camp guards all over Germany to enable them to order prisoners around contains the sentence, "If you don't behave, I'll have you sent to Luckenwalde." French and Russian old-timers here say that anything up to 15,000 Russians have died in this camp, a great number from a typhus or plague epidemic two years ago but at least as many more from sheer hunger and neglect.

That was Luckenwalde before the new thousands were marched in,

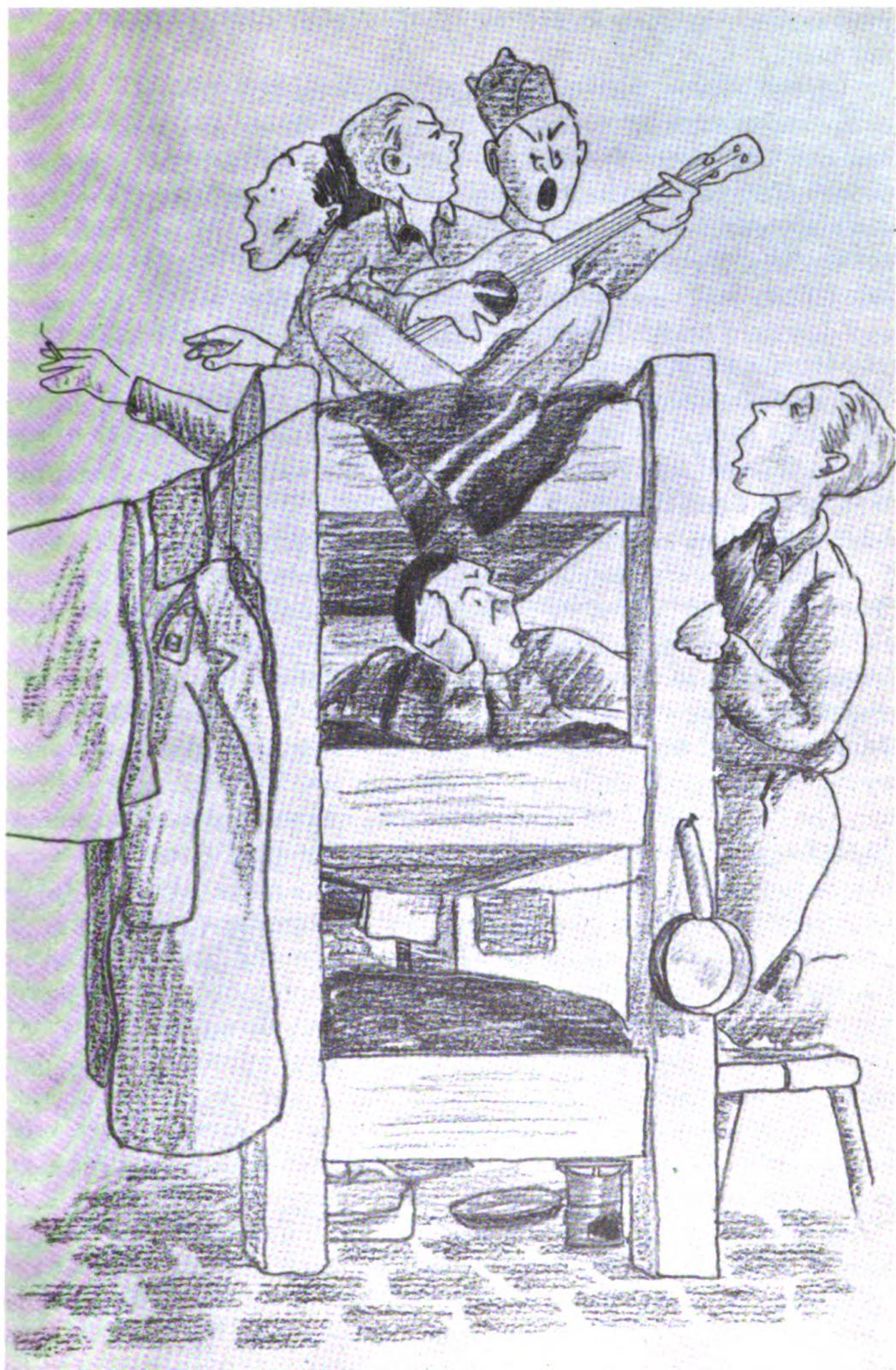
completely overwhelming the camp organization. If any serious effort had been made to better conditions since early February, emergency might be offered as an excuse for the original state of affairs. But with one single exception, nobody connected with the running of this camp has made the slightest attempt to get the bed-rock essentials, food, fuel, straw and bedding, to provide a subsistence minimum for the inmates.

Of the more than 4,000 American enlisted men in camp, 2,800 have been sleeping since the beginning of February in seven big tents of sideshow dimensions. Under them they have a little eternally damp straw. For cover they have two miserable, small-size blankets apiece. They have one big open latrine and one water point which must serve for washing and cooking for the entire bunch. Each man rates a floor space about six feet long by two feet wide. This, with the mud outside the tents, is all he has in which to live out his existence. The tents are alive with bugs, and since the Germans have not chosen to permit anyone to bathe since arrival, there is no way to get rid of them. After considerable argument by the senior American officer, one doctor was permitted to visit the tent camp each day . . . to "treat" the sick and wounded. He has almost no drugs or equipment, and when he recommends transfer of the particularly ill—the German definition is "in danger of death"—to the overcrowded camp hospital, it usually takes days to get the Germans to act.

The officers, and the GI's of other nationalities, are luckier. They sleep 175 to a room in barracks which measure about 100 by forty feet, dank, dark and filthy. Like the men in the tent camp, they are full of lice, and their three-tiered wooden bunks are alive with bed-bugs and fleas. There is a stool for every two men, on the average, and a table for every thirty. This, plus the fact that animal heat has kept the barracks above freezing all winter, makes them sheer luxury compared with the tents.

The newcomers to camp arrived, on the average, thirty to forty pounds underweight and in a badly weakened condition. They lived until the first week in March on a German diet so miserable, often so rotted, that a self-respecting pig back home would reject it. We didn't. We wolfed it, bugs, putrid meat, rot-ridden potatoes and all.

Early in March, by some miracle which nobody can explain, enough Red Cross packages arrived to make possible the issuance of one per man per week ever since. The Germans will permit the Poles and French and Norwegians only one every two weeks, but the Norwegians, at least, get their own special packages from Denmark. The Russians get nothing at all, and aside from a few individuals who do clean-up



jobs around the compounds, we are powerless to give them part of our own.

By the time of the first package issue, March 8, hardly a man in camp was capable of any sort of physical exertion. Resistance was so low that the effort of walking a few hundred yards tired a man for hours. The parcels checked the decline, and perhaps even began a gradual recovery of vitality. But the medical corps prisoners who care for the sick are still confronted with an appalling roll of dysentery, pneumonia and other pulmonary diseases, frostbite, manic depression and dozens of other ailments brought on by the march across Germany and aggravated by the cold and starvation since.

I was extremely fortunate because I reached Luckenwalde after a train trip of one hour and a quarter from Berlin. The 900 Polish officers traveled four weeks from Vienna, and some of them could not even stand when they reached here.

For four days after my arrival I was quartered in a small compound with 1,100 Norwegian officers, who like myself had been fortunate. They had walked at the most two days, and then had gotten space on the trains, one way or another. One group of 200 or so had actually "bought" a train for 13,000 American cigarettes. For this price the engineer had agreed to let them ride on top of the machinery of a Silesian factory which was being moved west to save it from the Russians.

The Norwegians, who are under the command of Major General Otto Ruge, Commander-in-Chief of the Norwegian Army, are today the most popular group in camp. Almost to a man, they were taken originally for political reasons, and most of them have served time in Quisling's concentration camps. They represent the finest in Norway. To me, a lone American, they gave everything they had: for four days having nothing myself, I smoked their cigarettes, drank their coffee, ate the sausage and sardines they had hoarded. Real warmth of hospitality shows up in a place like Luckenwalde.

Then I was shifted for three days into a Polish barrack in the next compound. The 900 Poles, like myself, had nothing but what the Germans chose to give them. They had had nothing for five years or more. They were officers who had escaped the Polish debacle by crossing the border into Hungary, where they had been interned. Late last year the Germans had ordered a chance in their status, and they were transferred as military prisoners to a primitive camp near Vienna. Now for four weeks they had been on the road, locked into boxcars and occasionally permitted out once in twenty-four hours. When allowed to

leave the cars, they emptied the suitcases they had been using as latrines.

The Germans look on Norwegians and other Scandinavians as second only to Germans in blood, a sort of second-rate *Herrenvolk*. The Norwegians, in consequence, had gotten relatively good barracks. The Polish barracks were only half-equipped with bed boards, mattresses and the like, and the German attitude toward Poland was best illustrated by the reply to a request for some toilet paper. The Poles were told that, paper being unavailable, they should use their hands and wash them afterward in water, which was plentiful.

The story of these Poles is a catalogue of the misery wrought by Hitler across Europe. None of them has seen his family for five years. Many know that their wives and children died in Warsaw or Lublin when the collapse of Poland came, and many others know that their near ones went into the charnel houses or before the firing squads. Many have no word whatever. Their families have been swallowed up, into Russia or into the Nazi war machine. They know only that it is unlikely they will ever emerge. Few of these men have any life to return to inside Poland, if indeed there is to be a Poland to which they care to return. To a degree which is inconceivable to nonEuropeans, war has stripped these men to the bone. It has left them only their souls, those staunch Polish souls which never wavered under defeat or foreign oppression. These men are as typical of Polish patriotism as the Norwegians are of their own.

On February 1 there arrived the first contingent of Americans, eighty-five officers and enlisted men who had started off with the main body from Oflag 64 in Schubin, and who had dropped off sick en route. I found Henri de Vilmorin among them, proud possessor of a child's wooden sled for which he had bartered, and on which he had dragged all his possessions. Major Newt Cole was also in the first group. He told me that Wright Bryan, with other hospital cases, had been left behind at Schubin, and that they had undoubtedly been liberated by the Russians within forty-eight hours of the camp's evacuation, January 21.

These men could hear machine gun fire behind the nearest hills as they marched out of camp and joined the refugee flood. At one point their German guards actually fled, and for a few hours they were free to wait for the Russians. At the last moment the camp commandant had reappeared with a group of Latvian SS men, and marched them off again. Many officers escaped *en route*. Nobody knows their fate. The

others kept going until the Germans finally agreed that the sick should be taken on by train.

New groups of sick arrived during the next few days, until there were over 500 American officers at Luckenwalde. They represented nearly half of the original complement at Schubin. The remainder, we have since learned, were on the road forty-seven days before they finally reached a camp near Wuerzburg, in the heart of Germany.

The Americans and the Poles have lived since early February in a compound roughly 100 by 300 yards in size, along with nearly 1,400 R.A.F. and British Empire officers from Stalag Luft III, at Sagan, Silesia, the huge camp where American and British air personnel were kept. It was an escape from Sagan which ended in the cold-blooded execution of fifty prisoners by SS and *Gestapo* thugs.

Conditions under which the Americans were brought here and the state of the camp at Luckenwalde were outlined in a letter which Lieutenant Colonel Roy J. Herte, the Senior American Officer, succeeded in handing a representative of the Swiss Government in February. If it had been sent through the Germans, who are obligated to pass on such communications, it certainly never would have reached Berne. The letter gains force because of its conscious understatement, and I include it textually in this diary because it was an official complaint at our treatment:

Stalag III-A (Oflag)
Luckenwalde,
February 13, 1945

THE SWISS LEGATION-PROTECTING POWER.

GENTLEMEN:

As Senior American Officer at Stammlager III-A, Luckenwalde, I should like to call the following conditions to your attention, to ask for a prompt and thorough inquiry into them, and to request that you furnish to my government the text of this letter and any findings which may result from that inquiry.

1. *Living condition at this camp.* There are roughly 400 American officers and 5,800 enlisted men now here. All except approximately 1,400 of the latter have been brought in during the last two weeks from camps in the east which have been overrun or threatened by the Russian advance. Living conditions are totally inadequate. The officers are housed in large barracks rooms without sufficient blankets or straw mattresses, and with an insufficient number of boards to make the wooden bunks all habitable. Sanitary conditions are not only primitive but in bad repair. There are none of the usual officers' perquisites like bed linen. Nearly 3,000 of the enlisted men are living in big tents with only damp straw for beds, and without heat, proper bedclothes or adequate toilet and washing facilities. Some have no

blanket, some no overcoat. For all ranks, the food ration is not only small, but in fact too small to maintain a minimum standard of health. This situation is particularly alarming, because the men average thirty pounds underweight and have just been subjected to severe physical strain en route here. Efforts to secure an improvement in conditions through the camp authorities have been unsuccessful.

It is fully realized that present conditions in Germany are far from normal, but in my opinion conditions in this camp are such that they cannot be explained away on that ground.

2. *Conditions under which prisoners of war are forced to travel.* The following three instances will serve to illustrate. All concern American officers and men in groups which split off because of illness, injury or weakness from the main body of Oflag 64. The main body started out on foot from Schubin January 21, and at last reports was still marching.

The first group, under my command, including eighty-six officers and four enlisted men, left the main body at Flatow after six days' march. It spent six more days shut in two freight cars, during the first four days of which the men had only a swallow of water per day, although water was available at each of the railway yards in which the train stopped. They were forced to beg the guards for a chance to urinate or defecate. On the first day of the train trip, they received three-quarters of a loaf of bread and one-half can of German army meat apiece, and on the fifth day about one-quarter pint of ersatz coffee. This constituted their total ration for six days. During this time the German guard received rations, and obtained soup for themselves from stations en route.

The second group, under Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Jones, left the main body a day later and rode eight days by train. These 130 men were locked into two freight cars so tightly packed that they could not all sit at one time and were forced to sleep in three-hour shifts, half lying while the other half stood. Their total ration en route was one bowl of barley soup and one cup of ersatz coffee per man. Their guards supplemented their own meat and bread ration with soup at various stations, but refused to let German Red Cross workers serve soup to the prisoners.

The third group, 118 officers and men including nine British enlisted men (under Lieutenant Colonel Leslie Cross) marched sixteen days with the main body, then rode for five days in four, three and finally five freight cars. They were given one-tenth can of meat the first night of the trip, one pint of soup the third day, and nothing else until reaching this camp. They arrived exhausted, and four men fainted in the showers during disinfection.

In the opinion of our own medical officers, the Americans in this camp are in such physical shape that they could neither stand another move on foot nor make another train trip under conditions now prevailing.

Health is a matter of grave concern on all counts. Not only have the already short rations been further reduced in the last few days, forecasting an increase in the general debility in the near future, but men are sleeping under such conditions in both the newly constituted tent camp and the Oflag that a spread of respiratory diseases is to be feared. Lack of heat and elementary hygiene add to the danger.

I should also like to call your attention to the following report, which I am naturally in no position to verify: that American soldiers from regular Stalags, and possibly a considerable group of prisoners never yet registered as prisoners of war, have been forced to work on road blocks and other military works in the approaches to Berlin in direct contravention of the Geneva Convention, and that during this hard labor they were kept on a practical starvation basis of one bowl of soup per day.

Sincerely,

Roy J. HERTE,
Lt. Col., U.S. Army.

If Herte had been in a position to write a second letter a month later, he might have added as known facts: that conditions at Luckenwalde became steadily worse in every respect; that repeated protests to the camp commandant had no effect whatever; that in at least two instances German guards shot prisoners on the march to Luckenwalde because they allegedly failed to carry out orders; that reliable witnesses saw prisoners, probably new men who had never been in a regular camp, at work on field defense works; and that in two spots near Luckenwalde American GI prisoners were being held in barns and other improvised prisons on half rations, shot through with sickness and at the mercy of German noncoms whose record was one long tale of sadism.

Arrivals and departures of prisoners have kept the camp population in a constant flux. The officers' section now consists of 521 Americans, 1,369 R.A.F. and Empire fliers including nineteen Americans in the Royal Canadian Air Force, 1,106 Norwegians and 979 Poles. Officers and men together, the camp holds 4,773 Americans, 3,796 British, 3,206 Russians, 1,823 French and a scattering of other nationalities. It is doubtful that any single one of these men could pass an army physical examination at the moment.

They arrived here suffering from everything from chilblains and frostbite to scarlet fever and pneumonia, worn out by trips which for lack of cars, occasional sheer malice and invariable lack of organization simply beggar description. They were herded into vermin-ridden barracks which even in deep winter received only a few coal-dust briquets daily for heating, plus occasional supplies of green wood as a supplement. Hundreds have been sleeping on the damp brick floors because they have no mattresses and no bed boards to fill the bottoms of their bunks. They received only two blankets apiece at the best, none at the worst. Medical supplies throughout have been catastrophically short, and although the German medical staff, generally speaking, has shown good will, it is so hemmed about by camp regulations and so over-

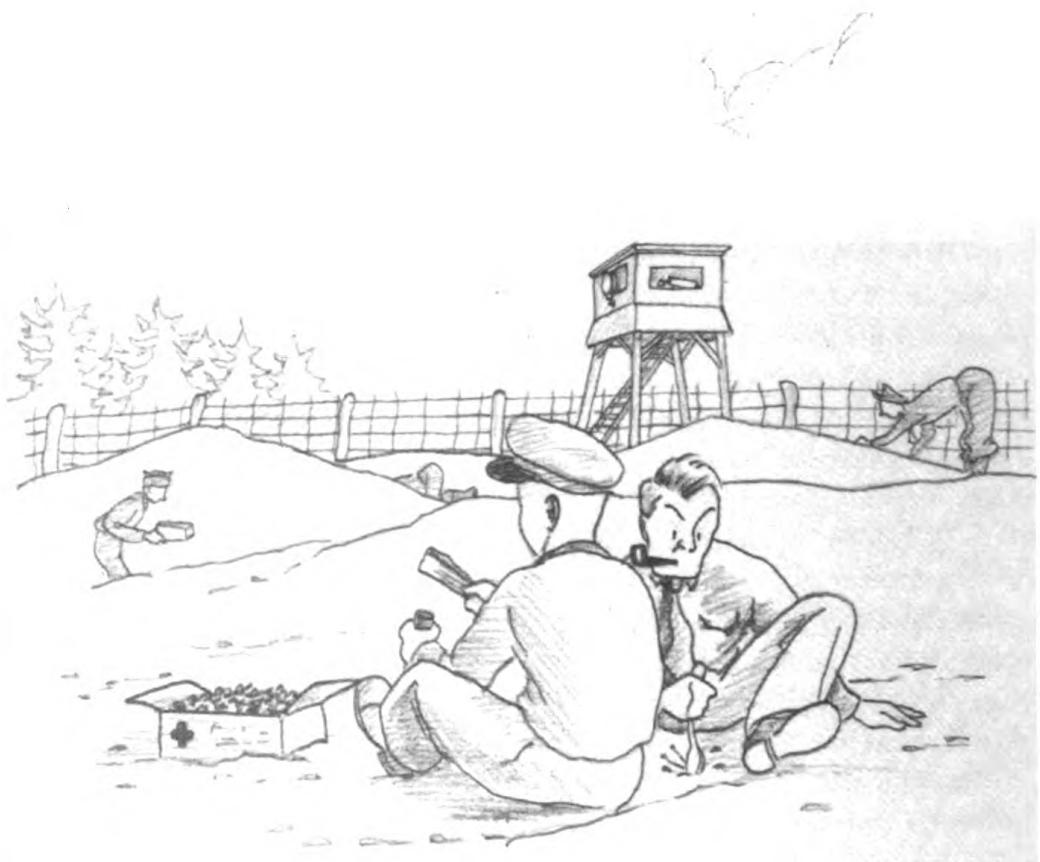
worked by the influx of prisoners that seriously ill often get next to no attention. In the case of the Russians, they get none at all.

Because officers and men normally are confined in different camps, Col. Herte is permitted no official contact with the enlisted men. The doctor who takes care of them cannot associate with the other officers, and the Catholic Chaplain, Captain Charles Glennon of Boston, is not even permitted to enter the enlisted men's section to hold mass. All this is intended to prevent collusion among the prisoners, in particular to avoid the danger of a mass break. Like most prison regulations, it is of little use against the ingenuity of the prisoners themselves. Thanks to Staff Sergeant Joe Gasperich of Peoria, Illinois, who as "man of confidence" is the American enlisted man's spokesman to the Germans, the responsible American officers are kept constantly informed of conditions inside the GI compounds and get all news of importance which reaches the men over the grapevine.

The food at Luckenwalde was atrocious from the outset, and the ration was further reduced shortly after our arrival. The British and American officers became convinced that the German kitchen staff and a few French prisoners who had been working in the kitchen for years were combining to steal meat, sugar and other rations which should have gone for all, and finally succeeded in installing their own kitchen staffs. Nobody objects to stealing from the German supply room, which the American kitchen crew, led by Captain Newton Lantron of Breckenridge, Texas, does with great success. Stealing from other prisoners is the number one crime in any camp.

Since Lantron's kitchen gang went into action, our food has been a hundred per cent better. It is still on a level inconceivable to anyone who has not sampled the German diet. It consists today of one "meal" and two lots of *ersatz* coffee or tea, plus certain bulk items which the prisoners can spread for themselves over twenty-four hours, if they have the strength of character to do so. In the days when we had no Red Cross parcels, it was impossible to do so.

The first dose of "coffee," or of hot water for those who want to make their own from the can of concentrate in the parcel, comes at 8:00 A.M. That is all for breakfast. Between noon and 1:00 P.M. comes the big meal, a pint of soup made from dried vegetables, cabbage, split peas, turnips or something similar, strengthened with a few shreds of meat, usually horse meat so old it can be smelled 100 yards away. On gala days when a particularly good job of pilfering has been managed, the soup may be dropped and oatmeal porridge substituted. At 3:00 P.M. or so comes the potato issue, amounting to about eight small pota-



Coal "Mining"—Luckenwalde

toes the size of ping pong balls, so shot through with black rot, worms and disease that nearly half of each must be cut away before eating. At about the same time, most days, comes the issue of twenty-five grams each of margarine and sugar—about a tablespoonful, and of the bread ration, a chunk of sour brown dough which would make about three normal slices. Kriegie cutting turns it into at least six. Both bread and sugar are sodden with water, presumably because judicious soaking increases the weight, and the kitchen *Feldwebel* can use what he gains thereby for his own purposes. At 5:00 P.M. comes the second issue of "coffee." That ends the Germans' feeding responsibilities for the day.

At the most generous possible estimate, the German ration amounts to around 1,000 calories per day, or far below the standard necessary for health. Until the Red Cross parcels arrived, the entire camp was slowly starving—as the Russians have continued to do at a rate of about three deaths daily ever since. The Red Cross parcels, with their big cans of powdered milk and margarine, and their cheese and chocolate, are so heavy in nourishment that prisoners who receive them can maintain a decent level of diet. I know of no prisoner, however, who has averaged the intended one parcel per week. At every camp, there are periodic "starvation months" during which the Germans cannot or will not get the parcels through on schedule.

There never have been sufficient eating utensils at Luckenwalde. A large percentage of the camp feeds out of old tin cans, using its fingers or little spoons whittled from bits of wood. There never have been enough blankets, soap, razor blades, stools, tables, toilet paper, or any of a dozen other small essentials. It never in my experience has been possible to get anything from German prison camp authorities except by theft, bribery, cajolery or threats. At Luckenwalde even those are useless.

The average kriegie was a pretty tolerant person up to two months ago. He disliked Germans with an intensity it is hard for a non-prisoner to grasp. But he was inclined, for instance, to wish German prisoners in the United States luck with their ice cream and cigarettes and roast beef and fried chicken. He knew what they were up against as kriegies. It's better not to mention them today. The American kriegie has learned to know his German captors better during the last two months. He would like nothing better than the chance to return home and take charge of the feeding of a camp full of Germans.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 4

TWO organizations, one with the authority of Heinrich Himmler behind it and one secret, backed by the common front of all prisoners, struggle for control of this miserable prison camp in the twilight of German power. As the allied armies close in, the grip of the Germans, based on fear, grows more and more lax. Every day, although the Germans don't know it themselves, the authority of the prisoners' own organization grows stronger. It could take over the camp tomorrow and run it smoothly. Some day soon it probably will have to.

The German organization is headed by a thin-lipped, curt-spoken Prussian colonel named Lutter. None of the prisoners knows much about Lutter, who works through a series of subordinates, but as commandant he is responsible for the treatment prisoners get at Luckenwalde.

The commandant of the officers' section of the camp is a Lieutenant Colonel named Koenig, known to everyone, including the German guards, as "the goofy colonel." Koenig is a pompous little pouter pigeon who insists on holding orations at all times, who constantly interferes with camp organization, always disastrously for everyone concerned, and who is a general nuisance. Koenig has been discovered on occasion popping boiled potatoes from the prisoners' ration into the empty holster where he should carry his Luger automatic. He has been seen showing the Russian slaveys how to operate the machinery of the tank wagon used to pump out the latrines, an activity not exactly consonant with his rank. It is impossible to carry any complaints to Lutter, and doing so to Koenig is worse than useless, because he never sticks to a point for more than fifteen seconds consecutively.

Koenig's deputy, and the officer in charge of the American officers, is a Saxon major in the *Luftwaffe* named Gorlt, the only complete gentleman among the Germans. Gorlt is a stern disciplinarian who would be completely ruthless with any infraction of orders. By the same token he appreciates straight dealing, and he always keeps his word. The few improvements in conditions which we have been able to get have all been due in the first instance to Gorlt's cooperation. Gorlt started his military career as an officer in the Uhlans. He transferred to the air force early in the last war at a time when pilots popped at each other with revolvers and exchanged salutes when they had exhausted their ammunition. He was shot down and made prisoner because, as

he puts it, "some Frenchman figured out before we did how you could put a machine gun on a plane." His squadron later was commanded by a certain von Richthofen. Gorlt deplores modern war, but never by so much as a flicker has betrayed any hint that he may hold Germany responsible for a big share in its ruthlessness. He is, I think, a sincere patriot. I met him first in my function as interpreter for the American contingent, when I accompanied the executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Walter M. Oakes, of San Antonio, Texas, to his office. Gorlt listened to our long list of complaints, said he'd do what he could, then concluded:

"You may think this war is over. I admit things look black for Germany. But I tell you we will fight, fight, until you wish you had never tried to attack us. I for one think the war will take a decisive turn within the next few months, and I for one think Germany will win."

Gorlt's eyes were brimming with tears, of pride or hope, as he spoke. Unfortunately, his girl secretary, who had been taking in the whole oration, chose this moment to break down in a fit of disconsolate sobs. It spoiled the major's effect, but it couldn't take away from the dignity with which he spoke.

Mystery man of the camp is a certain *Hauptsturmfuehrer* in the SS, a rank equivalent to captain. He is a ruddy-faced Swiss Nazi named Hans Georg Lindt, who left his homeland when the Swiss Nazi party was outlawed and, everyone suspects, will return there at the last moment before the final German collapse. Lindt's ostensible concern is the morale of the prisoners, which presumably involves propagandizing them for one purpose or another, including the recruitment of "free" volunteers against Russia.

German efforts along this line have been notably crude and notably unsuccessful. For a long time, the thousands of British prisoners in German hands were propagandized to join the "St. George's Legion," an organization pledged to combat Communism and save Europe from destruction. Months of effort yielded a roll, according to last reports, of thirty-three men, each of whom, needless to say, will be strangled if he ever falls into the hands of loyal prisoners. Just recently another similar effort was made here.

A German guard appeared in the barrack with several hundred handbills which he ordered distributed immediately. Oakes, functioning for Herte, who was sick, took one look at them and sent them back to the camp office with a note stating that he would pass them around only under force, and that if he were compelled to do so he would see

that the officer in command was held personally responsible at some later date. We never saw the pamphlets again.

I kept one as a souvenir. It is addressed to "Soldiers of the British Commonwealth! Soldiers of the United States of America!" and warns them that the coming battle with the Russians is not only the battle for Germany, but "the decisive battle for England, the United States and the maintenance of western civilization." It asks them, "as white men to other white men" to volunteer to fight the Russians and promises them repatriation via Switzerland "immediately after the victory of the present offensive." It concludes with the question, "Are you for the culture of the West or the barbaric asiatic East?"

Lindt has made a practice of calling me out to his office every week or so, presumably on the theory that all newspapermen talk their fool heads off, and that he can float stories on the other prisoners through me. I have welcomed the little excursions because Lindt usually is fairly frank in talking about the war situation, and is thus a valuable source of atmosphere, if not of facts, from our point of view. The afternoon of the leaflet incident, Lindt called me in. I told him that sort of thing simply raised a horse laugh among all allied prisoners. He disclaimed all responsibility for the attempted distribution, but a few days later tried again.

This time, probably on instructions from Berlin, he asked whether it would not be possible to get British and American officers to sign a round-robin letter to their governments, "calling their attention to the danger that Communism will engulf the world." I told him I was convinced that he could not only get no round robin, but that he couldn't find in the entire camp a single prisoner willing to sign such a document. On that occasion Lindt admitted that all this sort of thing was ridiculous, that it was much too late for such sideline efforts, and that the war was irrevocably lost.

"I sometimes wonder just what I'm accomplishing here," he said. "And when I go to the main office in Berlin I wonder what they're doing, too. They just sit around and look at each other and smoke cigarettes—if they have any cigarettes."

Just a day or two ago he was back at it again. He gave me a long questionnaire on American labor politics, with particular attention to possible affiliation between the C.I.O. and the Communist movement. It was full of the most detailed sort of questions. A Washington correspondent presumably could have answered it in five minutes. I couldn't have done it in a year. Presumably as a reward for telling him nothing, Lindt gave me a piece of hot news. Timoshenko, it seemed, had been

behind a palace revolution in Moscow in early March which had been bloodily crushed by Stalin. Timoshenko had saved himself, and had rallied huge portions of the home army to occupy Smolensk and sever all communications between Moscow and the front in Poland. This accounted for the lack of a Russian offensive, and might lead to an overthrow of Stalin and an alliance between Timoshenko and the Germans. Presumably I was supposed to rush back into camp spreading this story, for whatever effect it might have on prisoner morale. It got no farther than the British and American intelligence officers until a few days later, when the Germans managed to float it through the kitchen. Lindt tries hard, you must hand him that.

The German security officer, the official camp snooper, is a weak chested little captain named Braune who carries a silver plate under his bald pate as a memento of an automobile accident and says prisoners always aggravate his headaches. Braune spends a large part of his time in the neighborhood of the kitchen, which lies outside the main compound, chasing off various unauthorized people like myself who have talked their way out past the guards and gone over to exchange gossip, information and food with prisoners of other nationalities.

During the worst food period here, there was a huge pile of rotten cabbage leaves piled in one corner of the kitchen anteroom. This used to be a mecca for all the stray visitors, and the sight of majors, wing commanders and lieutenant commanders of several nationalities pawing through the pile for a few relics which were still barely edible, was not exactly edifying. Today, with a fair amount of Red Cross food in camp, the kitchen is the most convenient place to trade, and it's up to Braune to stop it. For three weeks he has been threatening Arthur Bergfjord, who was born in China of a Norwegian father and English mother, who grew up in Portland, Oregon, and who had the distinction at one time of being the only Norwegian naval officer who couldn't write his own language, with solitary confinement or worse because Bergfjord is always in the kitchen with a great collection of packages under his coat. In point of fact Braune, being typical of the German officer who has been perverted by long service in prison camps, would hesitate to take action. He has accepted too much in the way of coffee, cigarettes, and perhaps more, and knows a good thing when he sees it.

The guards are a sorry lot, constantly changing and growing older on the average with each change. Most of them today are *Volkssturm* men who are serving a sort of preliminary purgatory in the army and who want only to get out alive and spend the rest of their lives in peace. They are invariably cold, sore-footed and dismal, and they long since

have given up all pretense of keeping order inside the prisoners' compounds. Time was when the guards swaggered around driving all kriegies indoors during the air raids; yesterday, during a big day raid on Berlin or thereabouts, with 1,500 prisoners milling around the compound cheering, a meek little voice was heard piping, "Please, gentlemen, won't you go into the barracks." Investigation showed that the voice came from a wan figure in a First World War helmet, cowering in a slit trench. When he found that nobody paid the slightest attention to him, the guard slumped a little deeper and stayed there.

A new high in disgusted gloom was discovered the other day by a prisoner who fell into conversation with a guard, expressed sympathy with his corns, his backache and his asthma, and finally remarked that it was tough on a man to have to fight two losing wars in one lifetime.

"But this is my first," the guard explained dolefully. "I was too old for the last war. I was thirty-five, and I had several kids, and they exempted me from service."

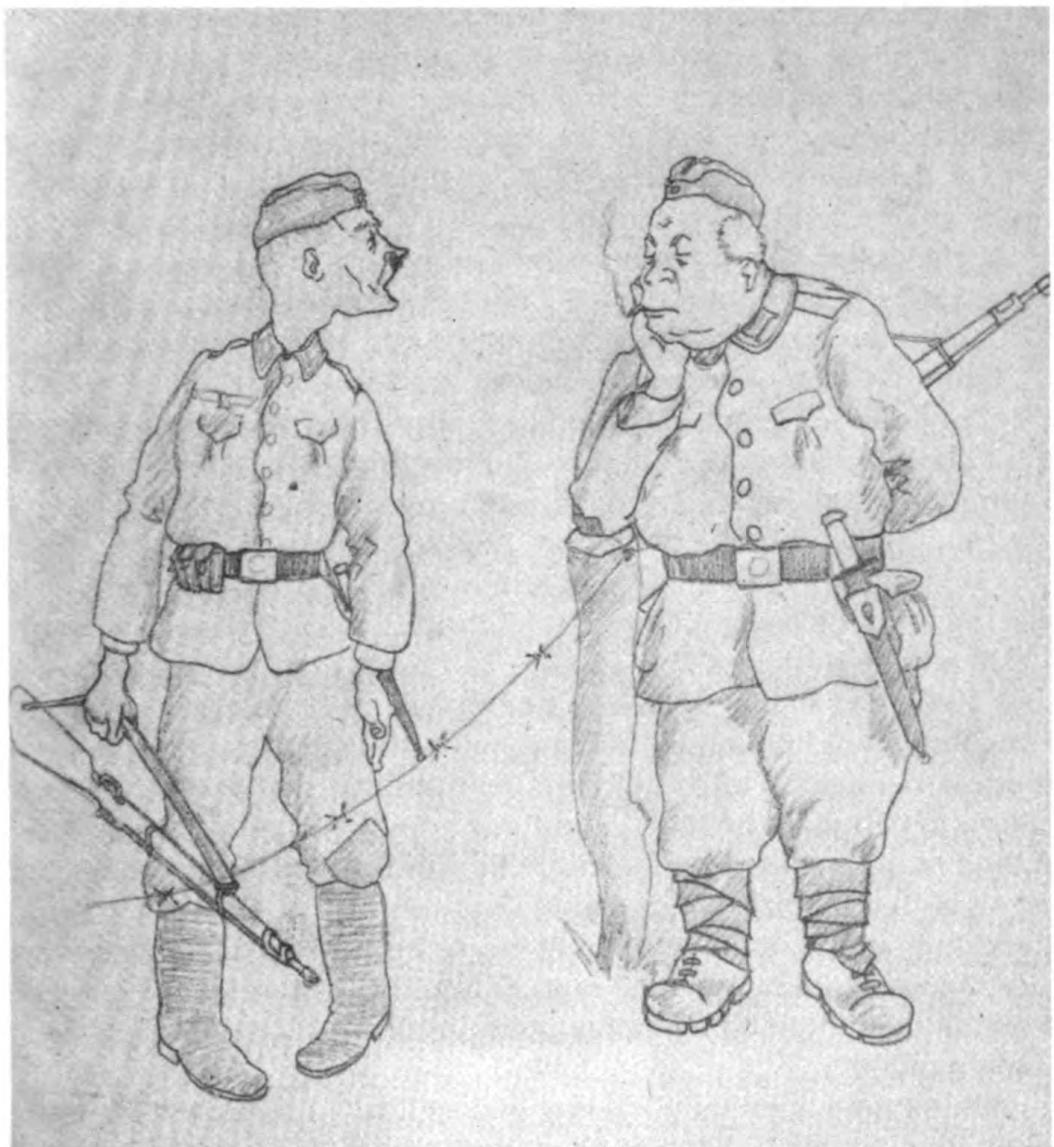
The ancients of the *Volkssturm* are no trouble to anyone. There are, however, a few professional prison camp noncoms who follow the usual routine of expressing sympathy on the one hand and double crossing everyone in sight on the other. They include one Fexner, who once owned a mahogany forest in the Philippines, and the balking of whose desire to return there will be a personal pleasure for several American prisoners, a *Gefreite* named Bull, who also lived in the Philippines and who speaks perfect Spanish and English, and an individual who goes under the name of Gunkel, a thoroughgoing Nazi who goes out of his way to be disagreeable.

There are inevitably a few guards for whom even the prisoners feel sympathy. One of them is a *Sonderfuehrer* named Kosidowski, a pianist whose fingers are so frostbitten that he probably never can play again. Kosidowski had a private art collection in a suburb of Cologne which he is sure has been destroyed. His wife and one daughter are up on the Baltic coast, in the direct path of the next Russian drive. Another daughter is in smoking Berlin. The other day he gave me a few rare stamps and asked me to keep them for his family.

"Perhaps one day you can locate them," he said, "and the proceeds from the stamps may mean a little food for them. I probably won't be around to help them, then."

I couldn't refuse to take the stamps.

Another sad case is a little man named Kamps, whose mother was English. Kamps, who has a crippled foot and a thoroughly frightened manner, obviously never had been far from the apron strings until the



"And I have to stand guard and watch them eat, Heinrich—and even in the last war, they told me I was too old for the Army."

war forced him into a uniform at least four sizes too big for him. He does everything he can to be decent to the prisoners. I gave him an angry bawling out the other day for failing to bring the German communique, through no fault of his own, and was acutely embarrassed when I discovered him saying, "I'm terribly sorry, Captain Beattie, I really will try to do better next time."

Kamps asked one of the other prisoners a day or two ago how long he would be kept prisoner by the allies after their victory. He said his old mother in Berlin had written him and told him to find out.

If the Germans knew the extent of the secret camp organization, they would be appalled. A dozen officers have been working on it ever since the fortunes of the German disaster threw us together here in February, and it is now ready to start functioning at a half hour's notice.

Commander of all allied prisoners, when the Germans clear out, will be Major General Otto Ruge, the Norwegian Commander-in-Chief, who is entitled to the position by rank but who, in addition, is such a splendid man and soldier that everyone in Luckenwalde respects him. Ruge will have under him a complete military organization covering Norwegians, Russians, French, British, Poles and Americans, and embracing all essential functions of any army unit: personnel, supply, transport, police and intelligence. The camp organization must be prepared not only to police and feed 17,000 people during a chaotic interim of several days, perhaps, between the collapse of the Germans and the occupation by allied troops, but if necessary to defend the camp as best it can against stray bands of German troops or panicky civilian mobs.

Ruge's control over the various nationalities in camp will be exercised through the senior officers of each group. These in turn have their staffs, and have already assigned men to the various branches like supply, provost marshal's office, and so on. In the case of the Americans, every officer and man in the camp knows today how he will function once the prisoners take over. The GI's have been formed into companies and battalions under adequate officers, and on paper, at least, could march out of here in good order tomorrow. In the event of a German evacuation, Lieutenant Colonel Herte would spend most of his time with General Ruge, and effective command of the Americans would probably fall on Lieutenant Colonel Oakes, an ex-top sergeant who is so thoroughly army that he was once heard to shout in his sleep. "Hell, lady, you can't get any better chow anywhere than in a GI chow line." Oakes, a direct actionist with at least twice the stubbornness of

the most stubborn German, has been carrying the hod for two months because Herte has been ill most of the time, and has gotten the ultimate limit out of the Germans by keeping eternally at them.

My only official function has been that of interpreter, which counts me in on most negotiations between German and American authorities. I have also been lending a hand in the intelligence branch under Captain Robert L. Walters of Baltimore, which tries to keep track of conditions inside Germany, of food and supply possibilities within a practical radius of Luckenwalde, and with authentic news from the outside world.

The news service in a big prison camp is a credit to the ingenuity and secrecy of the prisoners. They are so much better informed than their guards that a few guards make a practice of coming to them for news. This tendency has grown so during the last few days that it must be common knowledge to the Germans that we listen to foreign broadcasts. Yet the Germans, who make periodic searches in all camps for secret radios, escape equipment and the like, seldom find more than a small fraction of what prisoners have hidden, and anything which is confiscated can almost invariably be replaced quickly by bribery.

Until I reached Luckenwalde, I had never had contact with a smooth-functioning kriegie news system. All my prisons had been either transit camps like Limburg, where nothing is well organized, or special camps like Diez and Zehlendorf where there were too few prisoners for an organization. At Luckenwalde, Norwegians, British and Americans brought their own information set-ups with them, and French and Russian organizations were already at work.

For the first couple of weeks the Norwegians did the reception. My friend Bergfjord, who is a dental technician by profession and a radio nut for avocation, had constructed two sets. One was an ordinary crystal affair hidden in a top bunk of the Norwegian barracks. The second was the most ingenious radio I have ever seen. Bergfjord had made it during his confinement in Poland, where the Germans had given him dental equipment to use in the prisoners' clinic. It was self-contained, except for the headphones and batteries, in a full upper plate of teeth. The coil was concealed in the roof of the plate, the four prongs which ostensibly anchored the plate to the wisdom teeth were the headphone, ground and antenna connections, and a certain molar, removable by a twist of the fingers, concealed a crystal and detectors so small they were operated with a pair of eyebrow tweezers. With the ground, the set could pick up Radio Breslau, a big German regional transmitter. Without the ground, it got the B.B.C.

Just in case of German search, the upper plate fitted a certain Norwegian naval officer, who could clap it into his mouth and wear it indefinitely. Bergfjord used to say wistfully that if he could only build in a hearing detachment, he might become the patron of all toothless men, by enabling them to play themselves down the street to any music they desired.

Until about the middle of February, Bergfjord used to smuggle a B.B.C. digest to us through the kitchen, or throw it across the wire to me after dark in a match box. I expanded the notes into news stories, and they were read out in the barracks. Then the British began operating their news set-up from Sagan, a much more elaborate affair in charge of Squadron Leader Sidney Smith, a former correspondent of the London *Daily Express*. Using all secret radios at his disposal, Smith now collates the reports and produces two or three news summaries a day. These are read in the barracks while "stooges" stand at the doors to warn of the approach of German guards.

The kriegie news audience is the most exacting in the world, without question. There is no one to whom the news of an allied advance means as much as it does to the men whose liberation may hang from it. Prisoners want to know every detail about everything, and if they think the men who write the news are leaving details out, a howl of protest goes up. The news is discussed for hours after reading—never in the presence of the Germans, and for an hour or so before a scheduled reading men hand around the barracks, reluctant to run the chance of missing the news. The average kriegie spends his time either on a pinnacle of optimism or in a fit of deep depression. A victory throws the whole camp into excitement, and the consequences of a set-back are always exaggerated out of all proportion. A good percentage of prisoners, like the old-time R.A.F. men and the Americans bagged at Kasserine in Tunisia, have been "in" so long and disappointed so often that they affect to have no interest in the news, and say they'll believe the end of the war when they see it. But it's hard these days for even the old sweats to stay cynical. There has been nothing but good news for weeks, and most of it is so good it's incredible. It is almost impossible for a man who was bagged back in early 1943 in North Africa, when combat infantry and tanks were scarce, when the army was still green, and when advances came often in yards, to grasp surges like Patton's and Hodges' and Simpson's, which involve masses of everything and eat up whole provinces each day.

The radio digest this winter has contained more and more far east items. For the American kriegie in Europe, the end of the war right



now means the end of the war in Europe. That is as far ahead as he thinks, unless he has relatives in the Pacific. Two months hence, he may feel differently, but L-Day, the day of liberation, is all that matters to him now. For a long time, interest at each reading began to waver once the digest shifted from Europe to the Far East. Men who had massed in the aisles, hardly breathing, would light up their cigarettes and begin whispering among themselves. Gradually, the far eastern campaign has struck sparks in this limbo in Europe. Prisoners today see such progress in the huge envelopment of Japan, that they can begin to visualize victory there not too long after annihilation of Naziism, and beyond it peace everywhere for every man.

We have recently added a new feature to the daily news budget. Somebody gave me a big sheet of butcher's wrapping paper about five feet square. A prisoner trained in map drawing reproduced on it a big outline of Hitler's Reich, showing the principal cities, railroads and highways. Once a day I crayon in the allied advances from east and west, using a different colored crayon each time. For benefit of the Germans, this map officially is based on the German communique, which Lindt supplies us each afternoon. Increasingly, however, we have been taking liberties and marking up the advances claimed in allied radio broadcasts. The western half of the map now shows a great, motley-colored bulge which one day reaches out great fingers, like so many lava flows, over the face of the Reich, then the next day fills in the gaps between the fingers. In the east the bulge is flatter, because the Russians are not moving north of the Czech mountains. We all feel that when that eastern bulge starts expanding again toward the irresistible lava flow from the west, the war in Europe will be over.

The map is posted in the entry to our barrack each afternoon, and from then until lights out there are twenty or thirty people crowded around to see on paper the news they have heard in secret. As often as not a couple of German guards join the group, stand silently digesting the map, then walk off sighing and shaking their heads.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 6

IN A normal prison camp, theater, library, "university" and various forms of sport and recreation tended to decentralize the life of the prisoners. Kriegies who were mentally equipped to make the best out of their lives made a point of finding themselves some form of activity



Poor Herrenvolk!

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which could eat up the waking hours and prevent staleness. It's the men who lie in their bunks pitying themselves, complaining endlessly of the food, the bedding, the weather and the war, who go first to seed and who, granted that no prisoner is entirely sane, are most apt to succumb to mental disorders.

In Luckenwalde, where there are no facilities for anything beyond one sports ground which must be shared by 4,000 men of four nationalities, the barracks inevitably becomes the center of existence. As such, a typical Luckenwalde barrack room is worthy of detailed description.

I live in XII South, meaning the south half of one of six one-storied brick and wood buildings, each about 220 feet by 40, which lie in the compound housing the British, Polish and American officers. They are the only buildings in the dreary, grassless dirt, or mud, of the compound, except for two smaller but similar structures, placed on slight mounds at right angles on the south side of the compound, which are the latrines. The whole compound is double barbed-wired to a height of about seven feet.

Each of the six barrack buildings contains two dwelling rooms, about 100 feet by 40, and in the middle, a wash room equipped with three long stone troughs and two dozen spray faucets which are eternally leaky, frozen or otherwise out of order. A second small room holds a big laundry trough and a faucet, and there is a cubby-hole opening off it with a single flush toilet which is almost always stopped up.

Barrack room XII S. holds 175 men on the average; the figure fluctuates daily as new men move into hospital or the sick-bay we run ourselves and old patients are discharged. In the original German plan half the room was one mass of bunks, separated only by one- or two-foot aisles, leaving the other half for the stools, the six tables, and for daytime movement about. We shifted the massive bunks around, utilizing the entire floor space with the exception of a five-foot aisle down the middle, and grouping the bunks into self-contained cubicles of twelve or eighteen men. Generally speaking, congenial individuals form cubicles together, and share their food in small messes within the cubicle.

Spaced down the long axis of the room are three tiled stoves about eight feet high which, with ample fuel, would probably have been adequate to heat the barrack. We have never had anything approaching enough fuel and the stoves are used chiefly for cooking Red Cross food. There is at least one kriegie stove built into each cubicle for cooking purposes, and sometimes two or three, and there are several

dozen "smokeys," of which more later, whose genesis presumably lies back somewhere in the misty beginnings of hoboism.

The bunks are massive, three tiered wooden affairs, built for convenience in sections of six or twelve bunks, each section being two bunks wide and one or two bunks long. The lowest tier is practically on the brick floor, the middle about four feet off it, and the top about seven feet up. The top is preferable because it gets the light and air, what there is of them.

Light comes in the daytime from ten small windows spaced along the walls, and at night from eight weak bulbs, two or three of which are normally out of commission, which hang up among the rafters. The Germans turn out the lights at 9:00 P.M., after which we hang blankets at the windows and use "fat lamps" which are flat tin cans with bits of wick floating in margarine or some other grease.

The fat lamps, like the kriegie stoves, are excellent smoke producers, and since most inmates of the barrack smoke whenever they have the means, the usual atmosphere is so thick it would shame a pea soup fog. Periodic airings have little or no effect on it. The smell of the barracks is completely indescribable. It is a compound of unwashed bodies, dirt, grease, smoke, filthy bedding and damp masonry.

When you enter a barrack room from outside, the smoke and the smell and the damp hit you full in the face. If it is evening, a few blobs of light show up through the smoke, and gradually as your eyes react, you make out the bulk of the bunk masses, stretching off into the cavernous gloom at the far end. The bunks are a tumble of filthy bedding which it is impossible to air or clean. Generations of prisoners have permeated it too completely with the smell and the dirt which is theirs. Above and between the bunk sections hang great festoons of laundry, washed during the day and strung up to dry, if it will, before morning.

Gradually you distinguish the figures of the men who live in this ant heap, lying on their bunks, talking in small groups, cooking, playing cards, sewing, singing quartettes or huddled over some piece of kriegie handiwork or invention. Everyone lives in everyone else's lap. There is not a moment of privacy until late at night, when a man can lie and think with only the chorus of snorers, or the unfortunates stumbling out to the latrine, for distraction.

Our cubicle is a twelve-man affair with a free floor space of ten feet by fifteen which contains ten stools, a table, a cupboard and a stove made of brickbats, mud, old iron and flattened tin cans. We have the cupboard, plus undisputed right to a table, because our cubicle houses the American commander and staff. These slight advantages are amply

offset by the regrettable fact that the staff is swamped all day by visitors, official and unofficial, in one long procession. About half the day, there are at least two Germans present on one pretext or another. You move around by climbing over whoever is in your way, and if you are lucky, there's room to sit down on your bunk.

Time was when prisoners could manage to look neat all the time, and officers who knew their jobs made a point of it, for the good of their own morale and of the Germans' souls. An old kriegie gradually accumulated not only respectable quantities of food and tobacco from Red Cross and private parcels, but at least two uniforms, one of them dress, and a decent number of shirts, socks and underwear. Those days are past. The prisoners who stumbled into Luckenwalde after the terrible march across Germany were bundled up in all they had which was warm, and either carried what they could save on their backs or dragged it on little wagons and sleds. Today nobody is neat and nobody is clean. Most of us try to get in a cold-water bath in the wash room every few days. We shave every two days, which is all we can afford with no new razor blades to be had. But the shaves are never very good ones, the cold water baths never seem to give you a clean feeling, and you're filthy again anyway within a half hour of shivering your way back to your cubicle.

The senior officers are as hard up as anyone else in the effort to look respectable. Colonel Herte has no uniform blouse and would give his right arm for an American GI overcoat to replace the antediluvian French number he wears now. Colonel Oakes wears a combination of American pants, British battledress blouse and tropical uniform cap. Lieutenant Colonel Al Seeger of Chicago, with whom I have been messing, is still wearing a combat jacket with a half dozen jagged holes through the back where German shell fragments missed his spine by a half inch. Since he has one arm in a sling from frostbite, the sleeve of his Polish overcoat flaps dolefully in the breeze when he walks. An R.A.F., overseas cap obtained in a judicious trade completes his outfit.

The war prisoner's day at Luckenwalde starts officially at 7:30 A.M., when the officer of the day makes a gallant effort to rouse the barracks. He usually can count on having even the weary on their feet by a half hour later, when the hot water arrives from the kitchen and everyone makes his first coffee. Cooking is already well underway by that time. Bread is plastered on the tin sides of the stoves to toast, the fortunate are frying slices of spiced ham or corned beef or boiling their cereal made from stale German bread, raisins and anything else which looks promising. The less fortunate are mustering their assortment of mar-



Old Kriegies—New Style

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garine, sugar, jam, and peanut butter cans and acting as though they preferred a light breakfast anyway.

Morning roll call, which varies with the time of year, comes nowadays at 8:30 A.M. It involves lining up outside while Major Gorlt and a noncom check the count. Inevitably, at least half the time someone has made a last-minute dash for the latrine, or is asleep in a dark corner, or has gone on the sick list without reporting, which means a frantic search through the barracks. It used to annoy the Major, but he now takes out his scorn on the Poles, one of whose aged officers doesn't believe in roll calls and insists on absenting himself, by one stratagem or another, from each one. The R.A.F. contingent, who are experts in the art of "goon baiting"—"goon" being kriegie slang for German—take an incredibly long time to line up, and then wander around the sport field in such confusion that there is a well-founded suspicion the Germans still don't know how many Britishers they have.

Roll call means "dress" uniform, but the American contingent togged out in its best would humble a scarecrows' convention. The ground force officers are rag-tag enough, but they have nothing on the seventy-five or so recently shot down U.S.A.A.F. personnel, most of whom came down in pants, shirts and flying jacket, and who have gradually acquired the strangest assortment of garments this side of the Paris flea market.

Policing of barracks follows roll call. That means putting your ragged blankets into some semblance of order, sweeping floors which never could be cleaned in a month, and airing the barracks as a gesture to bodily health. Thereafter everyone's time is his own until evening roll call at 5:00 P.M. Some people walk, some play softball in a corner of the single football field, if the would-be footballers can be persuaded to give them a chance; the less ambitious read, play cards, sit and talk, or plunge into one of the thousand small jobs which keep a kriegie's mind happy. As a generalization, these jobs usually involve making something out of tin cans, but they may go as far afield as astronomy, novel-writing, sketching, or masonry. There is always a contingent at the laundry trough, and a few home bodies trying one last desperate darn on their ragged socks. Cooking goes on more or less all day.

Readers are lucky men these days. The only books available here are those brought along in somebody's pocket or knapsack from the old permanent camps. Each book has a waiting list of twenty or thirty people written on the fly leaf, and slow readers are not popular with the queue. Cribbage is the favorite card game, although there is some bridge and at least one steady poker game played for cigarettes, three



High-stake poker—a whole cigarette per chip. The gentleman at the far side of the table, incidentally, has spent a long time in England, hence the moustache, whose effect may perhaps have been slightly spoiled by the French fore-and-aft cap with which he has been issued.

cigarettes being top limit. Nobody these days seems to go in for the old style kriegie gambling in which hundreds of dollars changed hands, payable in post-dated checks.

The noon meal appears at noon to 1:30 P.M., when there's not an air raid to hold things up. Nobody cooks anything special for lunch, normally, because it's the one German offering which could be characterized as a meal even in the wildest imaginings. In mid afternoon the various bulk rations are issued by cubicles. This gave rise to a flash of German humor the other day. German humor is so rare that it deserves recording.

For years kriegies have used the call "goon ho!" to pass on word that a "ferret," or German on the prowl, has entered the barrack and that anyone doing anything he shouldn't should suspend operations instanter. Conversation normally stops when a German enters, tools are hidden, escape maps tucked away. The Germans gradually began to resent the term "goon," and since "goon ho!" lost its usefulness once its meaning became known, a variety of different cries has since been used. Since there are only ten cubicles in our barrack, we have been using "Cubicle Eleven, draw your sugar," or something similar.

The other day a German stuck his head in the front door, shouted "Cubicle Eleven, here I am," grinned, and disappeared. Now we have gone back to "goon ho!"

The final dose of *ersatz* coffee or hot water comes either just before or just after evening roll call. At 6:00 P.M. or thereafter comes the evening meal, a function into which an incredible amount of planning, trading, and meticulous preparation often goes. Some people spend all day getting ready for a supper which they will consume in ten minutes or so, and which often is so rich that it will keep them awake most of the night. Some kriegies believe in constant feeding. To accomplish this they slice their bread wafer-thin, far thinner than Sunday afternoon tea sandwiches at the village rectory, and spread on it mere films of jam, meat or cheese. By making everything infinitely delicate, they can keep something en route to the duodenum most of the time. Others believe in going through the Red Cross package like wildfire, cramming down everything in the largest endurable quantities until it is all gone, then fasting until the next issue. Most kriegies, however, try to make the package last out the week, and team with some other individual to split items like sardines, corned beef and so on, in interests of economy. Everyone nowadays tries to cache away a few hardy items like margarine, chocolate, sugar, coffee and cheese. We all remember the starvation period.

When dinner is over, there's little left of the day. The lights go out at 9:00 P.M., and the fat lamps at 9:30. For a while people talk and may even sing quartettes, but 10:00 P.M. sees everything quiet. It's nearly ten hours to rising time, but the average kriegie, well-conditioned to his surroundings, has not the slightest trouble sleeping solidly through to reveille.

There is no variation in the schedule, day after day, except for Fridays, when the Red Cross parcels are issued, and Sundays, when there are both Catholic and Protestant services. Occasionally, there is some "gala" event, like a concert by an Italian violinist or a performance by the Polish choir, sixty middle-aged men who have tried for five years to assuage their nostalgia with music, and who sing as sweetly and movingly as any chorus on earth. The Poles always have a packed house, and the whole camp is whistling snatches of "Heart in the Knap-sack," the song of the Warsaw Uprising, which was smuggled in to the Poles in their prison camp near Vienna.

There is never mail here to break the monotony. Most of the people captured last summer, like myself, have never received a line from home, and have long since given up hope of it. We all still write regularly once a week or so, and the Germans systematically collect the letters for censorship. None of us thinks the letters ever get any farther.

The only other thing which sometimes breaks the monotony is allied air power. At least a dozen times the camp has been electrified by the swelling thunder from the west which heralds the approach of the giants, and has rushed out from its barracks to watch while the tight formations, one after another in endless line astern, materialize from the haze and sweep in over Berlin or some target off to the south. The furrows of the vapor trails write doom across the German sky, and the great columns of smoke from shattered cities must be clearly visible to the Russians, in their assault positions off beyond the Oder.

The R.A.F. raids by night have become so consistent that only the real enthusiasts gather on the bank of the American latrine to watch the searchlights grope and the ack-ack spangle the sky, then to exult to each other as the chandelier flares and target indicators go down, and the slow red glow of the blockbusters grows and then dies up in Berlin.

Since the days of the Battle of Britain air raids have had a terrible fascination for me. It was so in the German attacks, from Dornier 17 to V-I. Now that I'm in Germany, where my own side is dominant in the sky and where airpower is assuredly smashing a road to victory, I can't take my eyes off the attacks. Newt Lantron and I haven't missed a raid yet, and won't until it's all over. We are both waiting for the day

when we see the first mediums or fighter bombers. That will mean that the front is close to Luckenwalde, and that liberation can not be far away.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 7

SEX is overrated. This statement is one which, admittedly, could be rebutted, nay even shattered, by any normal person who had led an anyways normal existence. No kriegie in his right mind could fail to support it.

No kriegie, let us admit, would place sex very far down the list of subjects of conversation, an art in which the war prisoner is extremely highly developed. But any kriegie would certainly submit, thinking back on a hundred bull sessions over a flickering fat lamp or in the weak German sunlight in the lee of the latrine, that sex ranks a bad second to the one absorbing subject—food.

A prisoner of war thinks of almost nothing but food. When he isn't thinking about it, he is doing something about it, always assuming that he is not in the midst of a starvation period in which there are no Red Cross parcels and therefore nothing to cook. Even that does not stop him thinking; in fact, it stimulates his cerebral processes and plays absolute hell with his understimulated but oversensitized salivary glands.

Watch a man mooning in his bunk or gazing with a faraway look in his eye across the sandy waste of the sport field at the dun pines beyond the wire. The chances are he's not thinking of liberation, of home and mother, or of that girl around the corner. He's thinking of a steak at least two inches thick, and beyond that of suitable surrounding dishes like Lobster Thermidor, fried onions, baked Idahoes, Caramel Custard Pie and three kinds of ice cream.

The turn of the kriegie mind was the subject of a verse effort by Lieutenant Larry Phelan of New York, which appeared in the "Oflag 64 Item" not long before the camp was evacuated and which many officers still carry close to their hearts. I reproduce it herewith with all due salaams to the author, whom I have never met, but in whom I recognize the marks of rare feeling and discernment:

NEW YEAR'S SONNET

(Written to the Loveliest Girl in the World—
who won't like it)

I dream as only captive man can dream
Of life as lived in days that went before:

Of scrambled eggs and shortcake thick with cream,
 And onion soup and Lobster Thermidor;
 Of roasted beef and chops and sirloin steaks,
 And turkey breast and golden leg or wing,
 Of sausage, maple syrup, buckwheat cakes,
 And chickens, broiled or fried or a la king.
 I dwell on rolls or buns for days and days,
 Hot cornbread, biscuits, Philadelphia scrapple,
 Asparagus in cream or Hollandaise,
 And deep-dish pies—mince, huckleberry, apple;
 I long for buttered, creamy oyster stew,
 And now and then, my pet, I long for you.

On those occasions when for one reason or other kriegie conversation begins on some other subject, it is a cinch to shift to food within ten minutes. Col. Oakes has a bad habit of torturing his cubicle mates by going into extreme clinical detail on the construction of *tortillas*, *frijoles* and *enchiladas* by his wife, who he says is the finest cook in Texas next to himself. Major Manny Robertson of Kansas City, who could lay claim to the best pie crust in Stalag III-A if he were prepared to fight to support it, is apt to rapturize over the merits of lamb chops and pan fried potatoes for breakfast. Robbie is a railroader in civilian life and has spent years cultivating his appetite. Col. Seeger groans about pot roast as practiced in Chicago. Newt Cole specializes in various rites with chocolate. He once gave a lecture to the camp on the story of the chocolate bar, and moved his audience so deeply that there were extreme fears of a rise in the suicide rate.

Inevitably, kriegies talk of everything they are going to eat the first night they get home. They spend hours compiling, revising and adding to—never subtracting from—that first menu, which in most cases will cost their wives or mothers a family's ration points for a year. I include here a typical menu, less elaborate than some, but all in all, fairly representative:

Celery	Cherrystone Clams Salted Nuts Broiled Lobster with drawn butter	Olives
	T-bone Steak smothered in onions and mushrooms French Fried Potatoes	
Corn on the cob	Lima Beans	Garden Peas
	Parker House Rolls and Biscuits	
	Garden Salad	
Deep-dish Cherry Pie		Ice Cream
	Coffee	



Domestic scene: The wistful guy on the top bunk has just been looking at a picture of his best girl. What is he thinking? "Boy, she made good fudge." The gent with the pipe is planning his first night home: "I'm going to call up Lillian and tell her to get all dolled up, and then I'm going to take her out and buy myself the biggest damned steak in Chicago."

Each of these items, it must be added, is to be served in large quantity. No kriegie, presumably, will be in a position to gorge his appetite until he has systematically stretched his stomach over a protracted period, but a lot of kriegies will die happy in the attempt.

Inevitably, also, kriegies compile in tremendous detail the things they intend to keep on hand in the pantry from now henceforth, not as the basis for full meals but for the odd snacks a fellow needs to fill in the empty hours between them. Will Duckworth and "Glenn" Glendinning of New York have one such list—they might more easily move into a chain store—which includes, among others:

Chocolate, cocoa, coffee, nuts, raisins, prunes, maraschino cherries, sugar, powdered milk, jam, butter (these for the concoction of various "bashes" which would give a candy bar manufacturer a nightmare but which cause the kriegie heart to sing like a heavenly lute); pickled onions, pickled oysters, assorted pickles of humbler origin, six kinds of cheese, anchovies, tuna fish, herring, salmon, lobster, shrimp, sardines, salami, bologna, liverwurst, frankfurters, deviled ham, deviled tongue, deviled chicken, corned beef, crackers, pretzels, potato chips (these to accompany the odd glass of beer); pancake flour, biscuit flour, cake flour, gingerbread mix, dehydrated soups, canned soups, canned spaghetti dinners, canned stews and whole hams, tongues, chickens and other available meats (these for use when the hunger urge becomes too strong for satisfaction by anything but all-out measures).

Kriegie conversation was bound to develop its own glossary. I am by no means expert in this, being a new boy who has never yet had a chance to settle down, but include herewith some of the commoner (and printable) terms:

Kriegie—Prisoner of War. Comes from the German "*Kriegsgefangene*."

Goon—German.

Purge—A transfer to another camp, often ordered for prisoners whom the Germans consider a "bad influence," like experts at tunnel building.

Stube—Room, taken from the German.

Brew—Any drink, usually coffee, tea or chocolate, and preferably very sweet.

Kriegie brew—Alcohol made from raisins, potato peels and other ingredients which seem indicated at the time.

Stooge—A lookout posted to warn of the approach of Germans during illegal activities inside the barrack.

Bash—Noun or verb, meaning a meal or particularly the sweetest possible compound of thick-mixed powdered milk plus chocolate, raisins, jam, the kernels from prune pits ("Kriegie almonds") and other ingredients calculated to cause indigestion; and, to consume same.

Gash—A food windfall which calls for extra consumption.

Bunker—Solitary confinement, taken from the German.

Krank—Sick, from the German.

Prima—Wonderful.

Kaput—Done, finished, broken, taken from the German.

Abort, Bog—The latrine.

Shocker—Madman.

Glop—Good food; also a sort of cereal or pudding made by boiling goon bread with available sugar or saccharine.

Pit, sack—Bed.

Pit bashing—Excessive sleep.

Ferret—A goon agent sent snooping through the barracks to scent anything untoward. Ferrets have a hard life, because they never find anything to speak of, and usually are subjected to a barrage of wise cracks in pidgin German.

Bird—The news budget.

Kriegie conversation unerringly leads to the most heated debates, and the debates to bets. Thousands of these bets were made on the end of the war, involving food items, tobacco, of entire Red Cross parcels, and will be wiped off the books by L-Day. Many have years to run. Some bets have involved very large sums of money. There are records of the following: 8,000 Reichmarks to two on a camp football match, which the favorites lost; 10,000 marks at chemin der fer; £4,000 made by five men in a game of casino; £1,500 lost by a British prisoner on a book on a soccer league, and recouped at casino; \$500 to \$1 bet against an escape, which succeeded; several hundred dollars bet on "boat races" between match boxes in running gutters in the camp street.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 8

KRIEGIE cookery is a strange and wonderful thing, ranging through every shade of quality from burned toast and tepid tea to concoctions which flout every known law of dietetics and would be classed as sheer fantasy by the inventor of the banana split.

Welsh rarebit is as digestible as junket compared with some prison camp concoctions, which run not only to quantity but which stress the ultimate in richness and particularly in sweetness. A real kriegie bash on the grand scale should, by all rights, lay a man out for a week.

Bashes, however, don't come every day, because nobody can afford them, and most kriegie cookery, be it said, is astonishingly good. This probably is only natural in a function which is the be-all of each day. No care is too much trouble for a good kriegie cook. He will devote hours of effort and all his ingenuity to improvising where he lacks proper ingredients or facilities, and in most cases he succeeds. There are sad instances when someone tries to reconstruct a favorite recipe of his mother's out of the odoriferous past when he draped himself over the kitchen table and watched bug-eyed as the stirring progressed, but these are few and far between. Kriegie cooking in general is not elaborate but it tastes very good, and oh boy, is it filling.

The keynote of good kriegie cookery is improvisation. Goon bread, which, although it tastes more and more like cake with each week you spend in camp, is still pretty sorry stuff, can be turned into palatable puddings or cereals. Potatoes or the biscuits out of Red Cross parcels become pie crust, or you can also use dry cereal or Scandinavian Knaeckebrod, a commodity fairly common in our camp, thanks to the Norwegians. German sugar beet tops, just about the most unpalatable mess served up to prisoners of war, can be turned into respectable pureed spinach by anyone not so disgusted at the sight of them that he refuses to take the trouble.

All these things are possible thanks to the Red Cross. The margarine, sugar, powdered milk and other staples in the parcels help cover up a lot of sins, and enable anyone with imagination to vary his diet almost indefinitely. The parcels are wholly responsible for most of the more elaborate dishes.

Baked spiced ham *au gratin*, shepherd's pie, fish cakes with cheese sauce, salmon loaf, corned beef hash, tuna croquettes are all commonplace items. Sheer luxury items like chocolate and raisin cake, multi-millionaire's pie or raisin meringue pie (*ersatz* meringue, admittedly) are common enough to cause little comment, particularly early in the week before the Red Cross parcels have shrunk and we all start rationing ourselves.

The following recipe admittedly was out of the ordinary, being high point in a "bash" which seemed indicated by the coincidence of Easter, a birthday, and a flood of good front news. A nonkriegie who examined the recipe might be pardoned for thinking that April Fool's Day

probably was chiefly responsible. This particular dish followed hot and cold hors d'oeuvres made with sardines, salmon and cheese, spiced ham stuffed with raisins and baked with cheese, and mashed potatoes.

Flight Lieutenant C. Wallace Floody of the Royal Canadian Air Force, a man noted for his imagination in the construction of tunnels for kriegie escape, was chief architect of this dish, which served five men with about three quarters of a quart each of what Wally called "trifle." It might more properly be called "Floody's Folly, or Nightmare for Five." Here it is:

First layer: 10 ounces of army Premix cereal from the Red Cross, 6 crumbled army biscuits, 3 tablespoonfuls of cocoa, a 2-ounce chocolate bar, $\frac{1}{3}$ of a quart can of powdered milk, mixed thick, 2 tablespoonfuls of margarine, $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of sugar, all mashed, coaxed and wheedled into a crunchy goo.

Second layer: $\frac{1}{2}$ inch whip composed of 4 tablespoonfuls of powdered milk, six of margarine, $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of sugar and 2 teaspoonsfuls of coffee concentrate. This was a sort of breather layer, working from the top toward the considerable last hurdle represented by layer one.

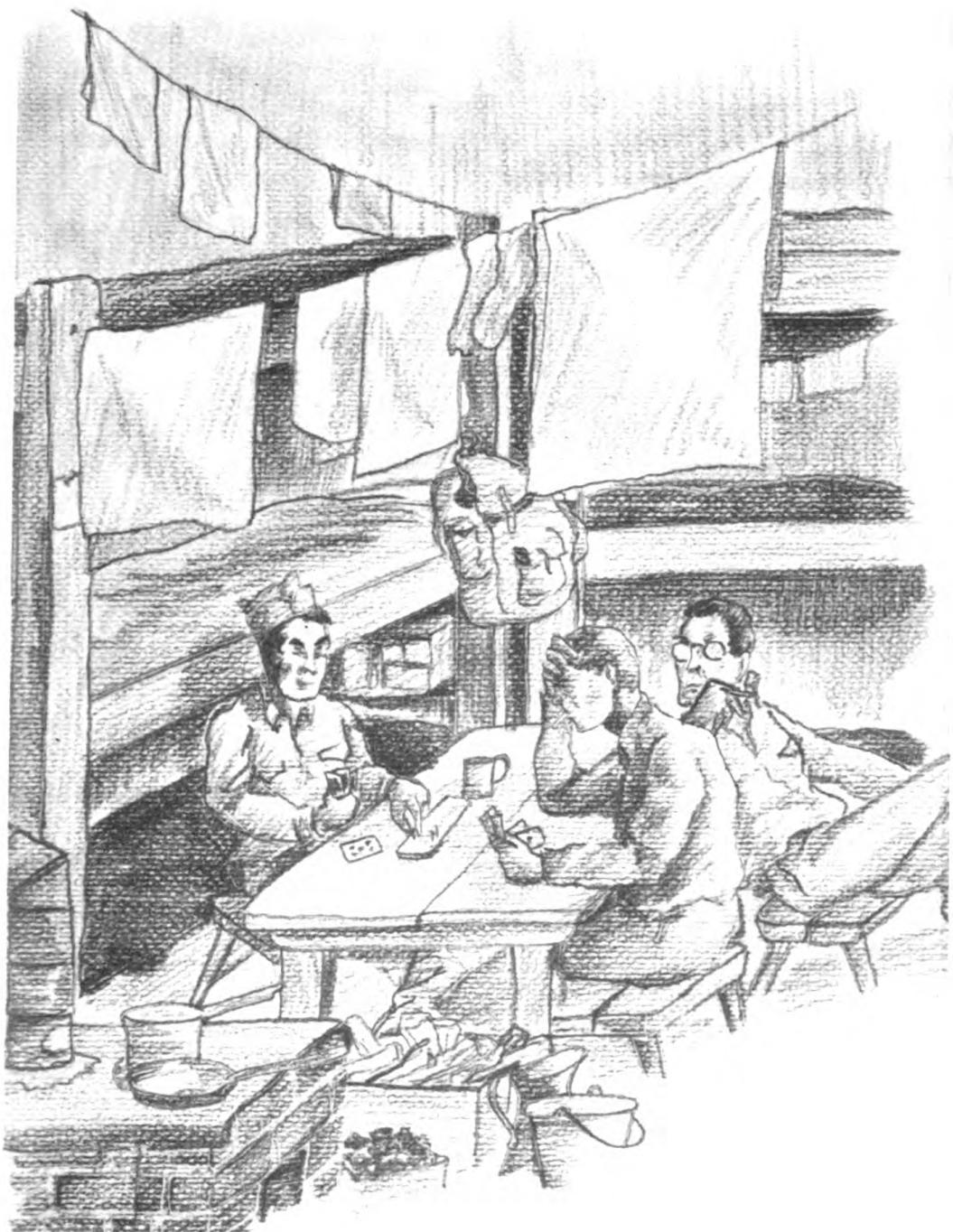
Third layer: a cooked confection containing $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of raisins, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of pitted prunes, 2 tablespoonfuls of margarine, $\frac{1}{8}$ pound of sugar and a touch of ginger. A fruit layer is very highly thought of in kriegie trifles, as an essential offset to the more robust fabrications above and below it.

Fourth layer: 3 ounces of chocolate, $\frac{1}{3}$ quart of powdered milk mixed thick, 4 tablespoonfuls of margarine, and $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of sugar, whipped together.

Fifth layer: 1 tablespoonful of peanut butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the crushed kernels from prune pits (Kriegie almonds), 4 tablespoonfuls of powdered milk, 1 tablespoonful of margarine, whipped. Very smooth, if inclined to gum the teeth.

Sixth layer: fudge, or Dentist's Delight, composed of 5 small potatoes, 4 tablespoonfuls of margarine, 2 teaspoonfuls of coffee, $\frac{1}{3}$ quart of powdered milk and 4 tablespoonfuls of sugar. Some connoisseurs deem a layer like this to be the very soul of a trifle.

Seventh layer: a whip of purest white composed of 1 pint of milk powder, $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of sugar, 4 tablespoonfuls of margarine. This layer is garnished with cherry jam, shredded chocolate, raisins and prune kernels.



Cubicle

Wally Floody has since said dreamily that the trifle probably represented the high point of his, or possibly anyone's culinary career. It was not, however, permitted to have the last word in this particular bash. Flight Lieutenant George Harsh of Atlanta, one of the camp's R.C.A.F. Americans, had been busy baking a cake as a sort of topper-offer. The cake was comparatively light. It contained:

10 ounces of cereal, 1 crust of German bread, presumably as a gesture toward our hosts, 1 pint of powdered milk, $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of sugar, $\frac{1}{3}$ pound of margarine, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of cocoa, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of diced prunes, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of raisins, with a protective coating composed of margarine, powdered milk and prune pits and an icing made from coffee, milk and margarine, decorated with the words "Nuts to People" in plain chocolate.

As one of the five celebrants in this ceremony, I can testify that I was full. In fact, I still am.

"Bashes" on that grand scale do not come often, fortunately for the army doctors who will one day have to give liberated prisoners their overdue physical examinations. Kriegies just can't afford them. It is undoubtedly a mercy that after a feed like the above, nature's laws of compensation step in and the participants must starve until the next package arrives.

The kriegie diet, granted Red Cross parcels, will include one specially prepared dish each day, and something special two or three times a week. The specials usually run on the sweet side, pies, cakes or the like. Some kriegies already have elaborate cookbooks which they may or may not dare show their wives on their return. I am just a neophyte, but will wide-eyedly note down here a few recipes which are common at Luckenwalde.

PIE CRUSTS

De Luxe: 6 army biscuits, 2 tablespoonfuls of margarine, and 2 tablespoonfuls of sugar, well rolled out and molded to the pan with the fingers.

Prosperous: $\frac{3}{4}$ of a one-foot square of knaeckebrod, other ingredients as above.

Ordinary: 200 grams of goon bread, 2 tablespoonfuls of milk, 1 of sugar, 2 of margarine and a pinch of salt.

Famine: 2 boiled potatoes, 1 biscuit, $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoonful of margarine, and salt. This crust has the advantage that it may be made in quantity, cooked, stacked and kept for use as filling is available.

(Increase all ingredients one third if top crust is desired, or

cover pie with kriegie meringue made of whipped margarine and sugar, plus a few drops of water to make it fluff out.)

PIE FILLINGS

Multi-millionaire's Pie: 3 cans of sweetened condensed milk, boiled 3 hours in the can until it is caramelized, and poured into baked crust.

Millionaire's Pie: 1 pint powdered milk, 3 ounces of grated chocolate, $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of sugar, plus about 1 pint of water. Boil until thickens, then pour into crust, and permit to set if you can wait that long.

Bourgeois Pie: 3 ounces of grated chocolate, $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of powdered milk, to which crumbled biscuits, or raisins may be added. Cook as above.

Poor Boy's Pie: 4 medium potatoes, $\frac{1}{3}$ pound of milk powder, 3 ounces of chocolate, 2 of sugar, blended with water to make 1 quart and boiled 30 minutes.

Fruit Pies: 1 pound of raisins, prunes, dried apricots or dried peaches, thickened with powdered milk and sugar, boiled until fruit falls apart. A 2-ounce can of cherry or pineapple jam, similarly thickened and with water added, may also be used by those who have been able to keep their hands off their jam at breakfast time.

ICINGS

Four tablespoons each of sugar and powdered milk, 3 of margarine, plus 2 ounces of chocolate, 1 teaspoonful of coffee, 2 tablespoonfuls of orange concentrate or three of fruit jam. Boil in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water, adding and blending milk after other ingredients have started to cool.

CHEESE SPREAD

One-half pound of grated cheese, $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of margarine, boiled in a little water until smooth, then whipped for 10 minutes and allowed to set. Pepper and meat paste can be added. The difficulty with this item, as Col. Seeger could testify, is in keeping your hands away from it while it's cooling.

SPICED HAM IN CASSEROLE

Build up successive layers of sliced boiled potatoes, spiced ham, cheese, and onions until the casserole is full. Fill the casserole with milk to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top. Sprinkle top with diced cheese and onion and bake until thoroughly crusted.

GLAZED SPICED HAM

Cover ham with coating of pineapple or peach jam, or with a sugar and margarine paste. Sprinkle liberally with raisins. Bake in $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of water, basting and turning until water has almost steamed away.

STUFFED SPICED HAM

Gouge one-inch hole from thick slices of ham, fill with raisins or pineapple or peach jam, cover top with slice of cheese and bake until cheese runs down sides.

HASHES AND LOAVES

Corned beef, spiced ham, salmon, tuna and sardines all make good hashes with potatoes, or loaves if mixed with goon bread, biscuits, potatoes or all three together. Salt, pepper to taste, and onions if available.

ICE CREAM

Make richest possible mixture of powdered milk, sugar and jam or chocolate, taking care to flavor very strongly, and gradually beat in the cleanest snow available outside the barrack.

BASHES

Some prisoners "bash" at least once a day, as a matter of morale-building. Some "bash" only the receipt of good news, which these days amounts to about the same thing. A very few go in for occasional monumental "bashes" which should floor them for a week. One individual, who shall be nameless, regularly "bashes" his entire quart of powdered milk, mixed thick, within two hours of receipt of a parcel, and then trades other items to get more raw materials.

All real "bashers" rely on the inspiration of the moment for their recipes, and hence it is impossible to cite hard and fast rules for concocting them. A "bash" may be anything from the basic powdered milk and sugar whipped as richly as possible to more complicated boiled concoctions and to real fancy articles flavored with chocolate, jam or studded with handfuls of raisins—the last-named being locally known as "Raisin Hell." Captain Wildcat Walters, who developed his eating habits in Texas, is arch-proponent of "Raisin Hell," but recognized experts like Colonel Oakes are inclined to frown at refinements which they regard as sissy.

Powdered milk is the primary ingredient of all true "bashes," and richness and stiffness are the primary considerations. Sugar, margarine,



Bash!

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chocolate, coffee, jam or fruit are added as the spirit dictates, and the mixture is either whipped stiff or made thinner and boiled, then allowed to set. In either case it is eaten with a large spoon and marveling cries of "Geeze, ain't that something?"

American prisoners from Tunisia bashed the allies across Sicily, up Italy, across all Russia and France and through each rib of the Siegfried Line. One expert, who had squirreled ingredients for months against the day of liberation, consumed them all the night the "bird" announced the allied crossing of the Rhine. The barracks that night, particularly a certain R.A.F. corner full of Scotsmen who had been sent into a chorus of wild Caledonian howls when word came that the Highland Division had led the British crossings, resounded with the rhythmic scrape of the "Basher's Syroke," spoon against bowl, a methodical beat which grows frantic as the whip stiffens and the libido of the practitioner overwhelms what moderation he ever possessed.

So much for culinary products. The mechanics of production and consumption deserve note. The Germans issue spoon and bowl to all prisoners, in theory at least. In practice, most prisoners at Luckenwalde did not get them, and have been using either what they brought with them, what they could steal, or what they could make out of tin cans and wood. A few prisoners got knives from the Germans. I hav· the tin cup stolen back in the Vosges last September, but it is too smal. for a real coffee drinker—prisoners drink coffee almost all day, if they have it—and I prefer the common kriegie utensil, a pint can fitted with a tin handle.

The lucky few possess enameled saucepans, frying pans, plates, cups and spoons furnished by the Y.M.C.A. The great majority of plates, pans and casseroles, however, are beaten out of tin cans by the dozens of amateur tinsmiths who pound away all day in odd corners of the barracks.

Kriegie stoves are a science in themselves. All are distinguished by the ability to burn almost anything short of rocks, a fortunate attribute since fuel shortages are chronic and even a kriegie must eventually stop short of burning all the furniture and doors in his barracks.

The basic stove is the "smokey," formed by crimping two quart-size powdered milk cans together with appropriate openings cut out with a jackknife, and a rough grate between them. A "smokey" lives on shredded cardboard from the parcel, bits of wood shaved from bedboards, bunks and barrack-trim, twigs, grass, and odd fragments of

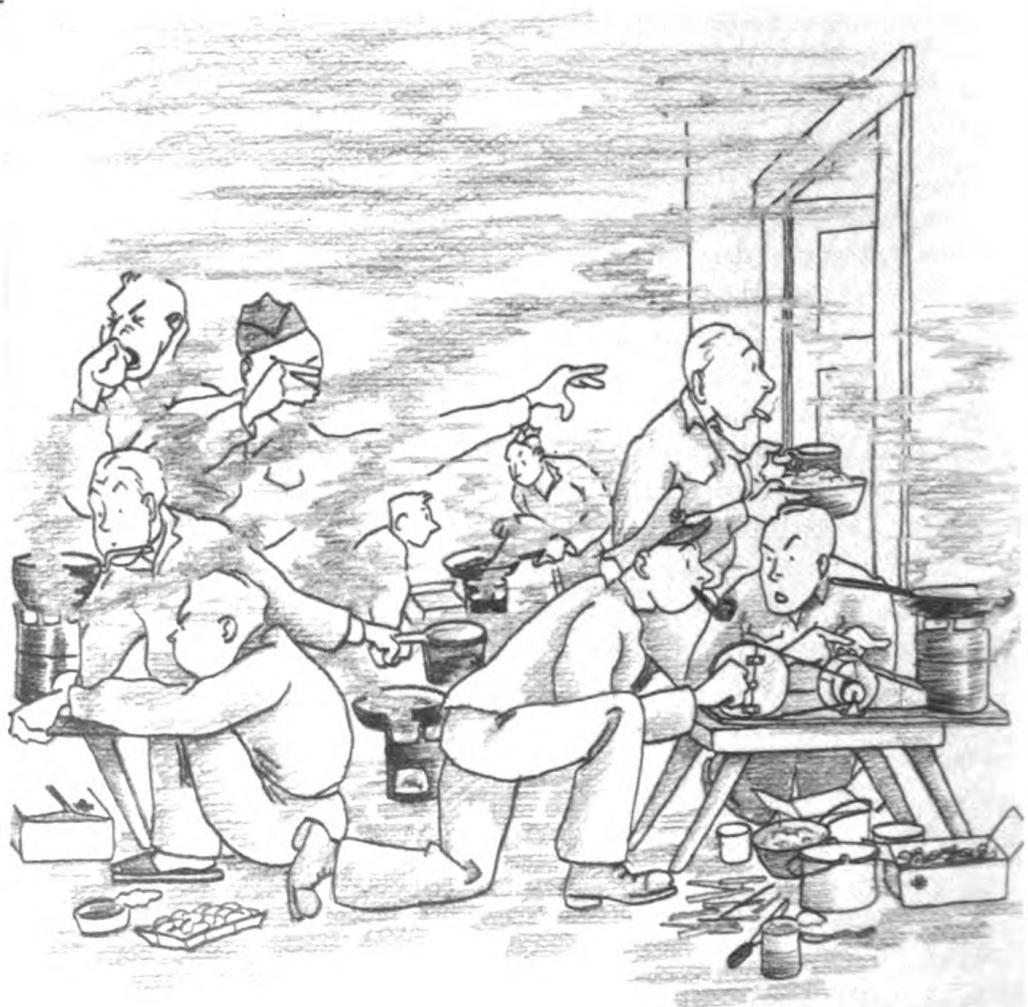
coal. It successfully coats everything within ten yards with soot, but does generate heat in respectable quantities.

The "smokeless heater," known by prisoners without souls as the "heatless smoker," starts off with the same basic two milk cans, with a one-pound margarine can inserted from the top and an intricate system of air intakes. When properly made, the "smokeless heater" will produce white heat without smoking, and it consumes remarkably small amounts of fuel.

The "blower," outstanding symbol of mechanization in kriegie life, consists of a large "smokey" or "smokeless heater" to which has been rigged a fan-wheel operating inside a milk can, which feeds a blast of air through a duct into the bottom of the stove proper. The fan wheel is operated by a string which runs around a large wooden wheel equipped with a handle, and the three elements are mounted on a board. The operator sits on the ground straddling his invention and cranking air into the fire, which is intensely hot. Some blowers have elaborate reduction gears cut from cans or wood, and some have streamlined housings worth pastel reproductions in *Esquire*. Some of the money-minded brethren in certain camps have become filthy rich by kriegie standards by operating their "blowers" for cash custom, charging two cigarettes to bring a quart of water to a boil, a process which can be accomplished with luck in about one minute.

All tin can stoves have been banished from the American barracks as a result of public demand. Operators must work outside and take their chances with the weather. In the British barracks, they may use the vestibule, a space about six feet by nine which at supper time holds up to twenty kriegies with their stoves and their little boxes of fuel, their pans and plates and Red Cross parcels, plus a concentration of flame-shot smoke adequate to hide the movements of an entire armored division. During these operations, it is on the whole easier for visitors to enter the barracks through the windows, cutting a wide detour around the "Black Hole."

More elaborate stoves depend on luck. They require bricks or stone for the sides, a two-gallon German jam tin or some old sheet iron, plus something which can be used as a grate. Portions of barbed wire prudently snipped from deserted corners of the compound have been known to serve the latter use. Mud is used as mortar. These stoves often are two-holers, with ample flat surface for toasting and an oven built into one side. Their smoke escapes in theory through stovepipes formed from dozens of tin cans jointed together. Some of the stovepipes, which exit from the barracks through holes where bricks have



The Black Hole

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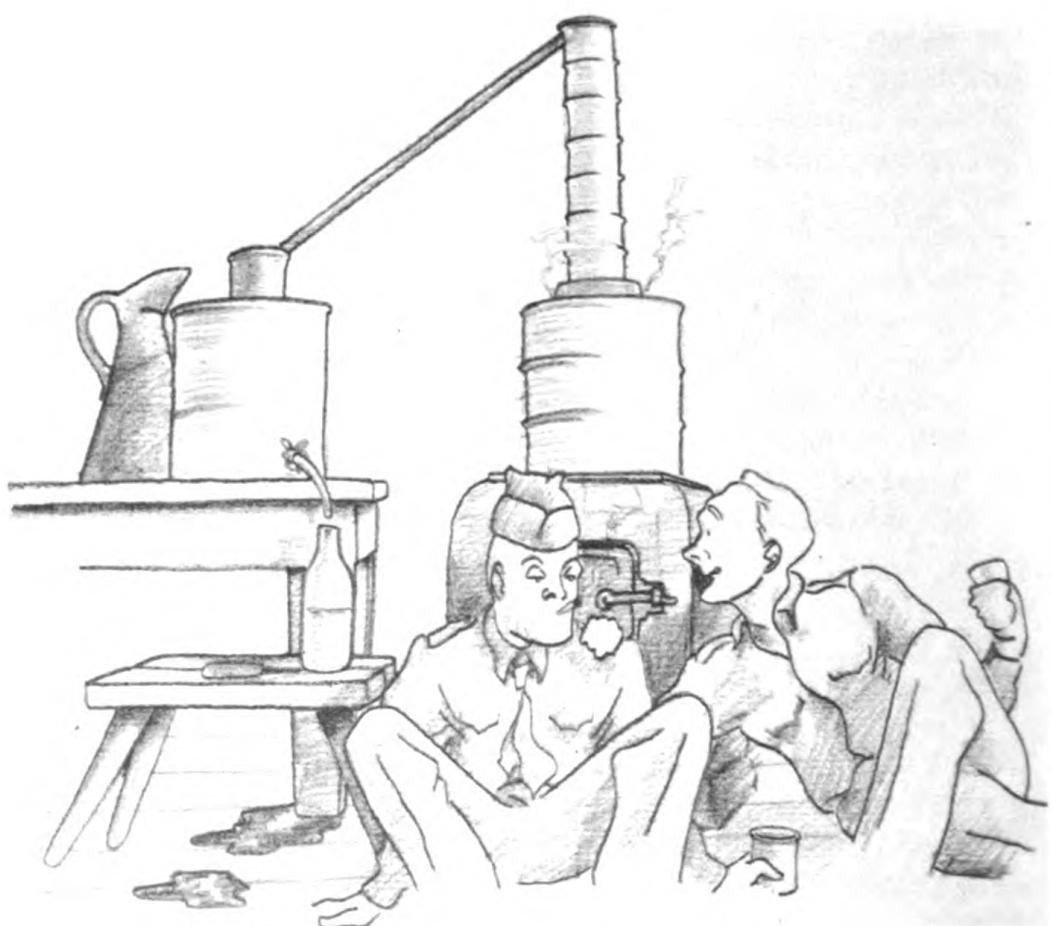
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been kicked out of the walls or where someone has regrettably stuck his elbow through the window pane, even have wind-vane arrangements at the top like so many big-city chimney pots.

The best efforts of the Germans, all their threats of prosecution for sabotage and other crimes, have failed to protect the bed board, which is the basic kriegie fuel. Odd doors, railings, even latrine partitions, also fall victim on dark nights, and they are quickly shaved up fine to foil attempts at identification. The Germans here have supplied a certain amount of green wood out of the forests, but it is definitely second rate to the nice, dry bed boards, and not nearly as much fun. The R.A.F. can be thanked for a new innovation. It discovered that the fill under the sports field contained tiny chunks of coal, mixed with the rock, clinkers and brickbats. The R.A.F. now "mines" coal in small teams, hunking down on its haunches and digging away with small spoons, and a few of the more energetic—the R.A.F. is not noted for its energy, in prison camp—have even gone into the coal business for the benefit of the supine. A small box of coal, possibly a quart, costs ten cigarettes, and the buyer gambles on the percentage of small stones it may contain.

A rarer kriegie activity in favor of the inner prisoner, but one which has received the attention of some of the best minds in the business, is the processing of the grape—or for that matter, of any other item which might reasonably be supposed to have alcoholic potential worth encouraging. This form of activity has regrettably been discontinued in the hardship conditions of Luckenwalde, where the only known source of supply is the French trustees, who charge exorbitant prices, but at some other camps it has been a prosperous institution.

The Norwegians, who used to get bulk sugar from the Swedish Red Cross, had six stills in operation in an attic of their permanent camp in Poland, and production was sufficient to take care of all essential holidays. Whole camps have been known to get plastered on carefully hoarded produce from secretly operated stills. During one notable party, a certain R.A.F. stalwart, scrambling around the camp garbage incinerator like a frontiersman standing off the Indians, held numerous German guards at bay for a half hour, undismayed by the fact that he had only an index finger, a cocked thumb and repeated shouts of "bang, bang" for armament, whereas the Germans were plentifully supplied with live ammunition. A comrade finally created a diversion to cover his reluctant retreat, there being disquieting signs that the Germans, who presumably had no secret stills of their own, were preparing to fix bayonets and take the incinerator by storm. At another



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soiree, a sex-starved inmate fell violently in love with a younger kriegie disguised as a barmaid, and scandal was averted only by the efforts of six huskies who still were able to focus.

A kriegie still can take various forms, and its construction is relatively simple once the piping for a cooling coil is available. One combine solved that problem by using an old trombone slide immersed in water. In the normal still, the cooker is topped with a "breaking" column of tin cans equipped with baffle plates. From the top of the column a tin can pipe leads to the coil, set in a bucket of water. The product drips out the bottom.

The recipe is equally simple: one pound of raisins per liter of water, boiled three hours. The juice is strained through a towel into a sterile container, and topped with water. When this reaches blood temperature, a culture, preferably yeast, is added, and the container is stored in a warm place under a dustproof cover. About a week later, bubbles cease to rise, and distillation can start.

Connoisseurs offer no guarantees if ingredients other than raisins are used, although some kriegies insist potato alcohol tastes no worse.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 9

FIFTEEN large sacks of "gash" parcels were split up among the American prisoners today. Luckenwalde is the center of the postal service for the entire German prison camp system, and for three or four weeks we have been trying to argue the Germans into distributing to us undelivered personal packages addressed to prisoners who now are in camps miles from here and who, under present conditions, couldn't hope for delivery.

Personal parcels are the luxury item of prison camp life. They fall into three categories, tobacco, books and clothing. In the case of the last named, only one item of clothing need be included to maintain the fiction. The rest is usually food—candy, dehydrated soups, baking mixes, chewing gum and so on. The Germans permit no food parcels labelled as such because they maintain their prison diet is adequate.

The fifteen sacks doled out today, after repeated denials that there were any undelivered parcels here, amounted to about two parcels for each twelve men. When our split had been completed my share came to:

- 2 figs.
- 7 prunes.
- 7 stale cookies.
- 1 wedge of Christmas cake.
- 1 ounce of cheese.
- 1 package Life Savers.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ chocolate bar.
- 2 pieces salt water taffy.
- 1 tea bag
- 4 pieces candy coated gum.
- 8 dates.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ package dehydrated beef and noodle soup.
- 1 cigar.
- 1 package cigarettes.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound loose coffee.
- 1 pair socks.

In most cases the selection was the result of an even split among all members of the cubicle. Some items depended on cutting cards, high man getting first choice. The low man in our cubicle, poor soul, ended up with a plug of chewing tobacco.

Even kriegies were stumped by one problem in making the split. There was one package, not a family parcel but one addressed to a camp senior officer, which contained several hundred assorted strings for guitar, mandolin, ukelele and banjo. These can be had for the asking by anyone who wants them.

The "gash" food obviously was not susceptible of serious thrift, the result being that everyone has been eating odd bits of fruit, candy and nuts for the last two hours. The assortment is such that no stomach but a kriegie's could possibly stand up under the strain.

The morale boost involved in a windfall like this afternoon's would have been inconceivable to me a few months ago. I could not have believed then how important small possessions become to a man with nothing. Because I'm a comparatively recent prisoner who has never gotten any mail or packages from home, I have never reached the relatively prosperous state of old kriegies, who at one time had full wardrobes and whose personal parcels from their families had enabled them to save up reserves of food and tobacco. Nowadays we are all more or less on the same footing, because the old kriegies couldn't take with them on the winter march the things they had accumulated, and what

reserves they did bring along have long since been used up. Nowadays, anything which might have any value whatever is carefully hoarded.

The contents of my musette bag and the paper suitcase I bought from a Pole for thirty cigarettes are probably typical of kriegie hoards. I just emptied out the bag and suitcase, and enumerated my accumulation of seven months. Here it is:

- 2 pipes.
- 1 empty tobacco pouch.
- 1 candle stub.
- 7 tapers made by tightly twisting heavy waxed paper.
- 1 fat lamp which doesn't work very well.
- 5 small cans full of cigarette-butt tobacco, saved against an emergency.
- 4 packs cigarettes.
- 3 cans coffee, can margarine, two chocolate bars, can tuna, two cans cheese, can spiced ham, which are emergency ration.
- 7 coffee cans, saved because they are so neatly made and might be handy to hold something, some time.
- 13 nails of assorted sizes, mostly bent and rusty.
- 5 lengths of string which do duty as laundry lines or to hold bunk together.
- 4 thumb tacks.
- 6 safety pins.
- 6 razor blades.
- 1 screw driver whose origin escapes me.
- 5 pairs socks, three of them wearable.
- 1 pair polarized sun glasses.
- 2 pairs anti-gas goggles, of questionable value at the moment.
- 1 shirt.
- 1 sweater.
- 1 suit underwear.
- 3 pipe cleaners.
- 2 pieces of wire.
- 1 wooden box.
- 4 lumps pressed coal.
- 1 box.
- 2 packs playing cards.
- 1 pocket cribbage board.
- 1/2 roll toilet paper.
- assorted paper, curios, German newspaper clippings.

It would be impossible to estimate the value of these things, because they are just about irreplaceable. Like any other kriegie, I would ostracize anyone who stole them. I would haggle for hours on end before trading any of them. But I might give them away.

A good kriegie will trade you out of your eye teeth. He would make an Arab bazaar merchant look like a philanthropist when it comes to negotiating a deal. But he knows the value of give and take by bitter experience, and if you are completely bankrupt of trading articles and badly in need, he probably will give you what he has.

When the American officers arrived here, I was destitute, except for a few pieces of string and other items of no real value. They were in a state not much better, because between Oflag 64 and here they had traded for food most of what they could carry. But as long as they smoked, I smoked. Oakes, Seeger, Cole and a half dozen other people whom I'd never seen before, remembering the generosity they had found when they first hit prison camp, gave me cigarettes, a package or two at a time. Henri de Vilmorin supplied a sweater. Winslow Ayer, an American in the R.C.A.F. whom I had seen last in the fabulous Cavendish Hotel, in London, donated soap and razor blades.

If I had had anything to give them in return, a trade would have been indicated. Since I didn't, these items were just gifts. There is a mart at Luckenwalde run by the prisoners to control prices of staple trading articles. Everything is on a point basis, and a point equals one cigarette. A quart of powdered milk, for instance, is 150 points, a can of meat 70, and so on. The mart recently even controls trading with the Norwegians in the next compound, who are long on cheese, sardines, salami and knaeckebrod, but short on coffee and cigarettes. The trading used to go on across the wire, but the Germans objected to the barrage of packages which kept hurtling back and forth, and such trades now take place only at night. We have stopped trading with the oldtime British prisoners the other side of the camp street, because they bilked us too outrageously when we first arrived.

Real kriegie trading comes during crisis periods, when any article is worth whatever the market will bear. There have been fantastic deals in every camp, and I list a few of which I either have personal knowledge or about which I have been told by witnesses:

£50 for a uniform.

1,000 marks for a haversack.

a watch worth \$100 for a loaf of bread.

a watch worth \$80 for 200 cigarettes.

5,000 marks for a bottle of brandy.
100 marks for 20 cigarettes.
\$3 for two ounces of sugar.
£5 for a bread and potato sandwich (owner declined).
\$25 for $\frac{1}{6}$ loaf of bread.
1 slice of bread for 50 days, for the first 50 cigarettes received by the second party.
a watch worth \$75 for a Red Cross Parcel.
a diamond ring for a knapsack.
60 cigarettes for an oil portrait.

Some kriegies are so good that they can start out at noon with one Red Cross parcel and end up by nightfall with two, all as a result of fast-talking trades. I'm just not in that class at all. I concentrate each week on keeping my cigarette and coffee supply at a safe level, and leave big business to those who understand it.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 10

I ACQUIRED today my prize souvenir of prison life. It's a cigarette case made from a margarine can.

The case is carefully cut and crimped to hold one package of American cigarettes. It has a closely-fitting slide top. On one side is an embossed S.H.A.E.F. shield—the well-known flaming sword of liberation under the rainbow of hope which General Eisenhower chose as the emblem of his Supreme Headquarters. On the other side is my monogram.

It was made by Bud Gillis of the R.C.A.F., who never had any experience with silversmithing or the like until he was shot down, but who now does the most delicate kind of work with the aid of a small wooden hammer and three nails, one sharp, one filed to wedge shape and one rounded. Gillis gets fifty cigarettes for cases of this kind. He gave me mine in return for a cartoon in his log book.

He is an artist even among kriegies, who produce astonishing things from wood, metal or leather with almost no tools. Kriegie home industry goes far beyond the various stoves, stills, chimneys, cupboards and boxes which are part of domestic economy. It includes a lot of articles which would be acceptable merchandise in a normal civilian store.

Some prisoners weave handbags out of odds and ends. Some paint or draw. A few do wood carving or make ship models. The Russians have a particular knack for leather work, and produce tooled belts or purses from whatever scraps they can find. The Russians also make cigarette cases from the aluminum from wrecked airplanes, decorating them with views of the Kremlin and the symbol of the Red Star and the Hammer and Sickle.

The French also go in for leather work, and some of them make embroidered doilies out of old civilian shirts. In the Norwegian barracks there is a middle-aged army officer who spends hours working through a magnifying glass on the most delicate sort of ivory scrimshaw—brooches and pendants and the like—which he makes from an old billiard ball with the aid of a few gouges adapted from dentist's drills.

That sort of thing takes infinite patience, and must be learned by trial and error. The average prisoner never used his hands before for any work of the sort, and was driven into it as an escape from boredom. Most kriegies never get that far, but almost every kriegie becomes a tinsmith to one extent or another.

The most valuable single object in the average Arab household along the North African shore and down past Suez to Ethiopia is the common, ordinary five-gallon gasoline can. It is used for carrying water, cooking food, harvesting crops. It is a chair or table or cupboard, and can be flattened out to repair the roof or a crumbling side wall of the house. The Red Cross tin can is just as valuable to the prisoner.

It is fitted with a tin handle and becomes a cup. It is flattened out, crimped to other cans, to make the top of a stove, or a stove lid. It becomes plates, ash trays, frying pans, baking dishes, fat lamps, match cases, tobacco boxes, swizzle sticks, salt shakers and, in some cases, even cigarette lighters. All the kriegie needs is an old knife or, better, a pair of scissors, a pair of pliers, a hammer of one sort or another, and enough imagination to devise what he wants. Some kriegie tinsmiths spend all day cutting and pounding, stopping only when there are Germans in sight and it's prudent to hide the pliers and the hammer. Thanks to various charitable brethren, I now have a full set of eating implements, cup, platter and plate, all monogrammed, a very elegant baking dish representing five different brands of powdered milk, and an assortment of soap dishes, tobacco boxes and the like which put my housekeeping on a pretty substantial basis.



Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde

APRIL 12

THE camp is in a ferment tonight, partly because liberation could come at any moment, now, and partly because the Germans are bent on one last effort to keep us in their clutches—presumably as hostages.

The Americans crossed the Elbe river today, putting them beyond the last real barrier on the road to Berlin. The Germans certainly have no troops capable of halting them once they swarm across the river in force, and Luckenwalde is certain to be involved in any big-scale attack on the capital.

The Germans, who are jittery to the last man, still want to keep us out of allied hands. Today, after several days of rumor, they ordered all R.A.F. and other Empire air personnel to leave camp, and marched them off to the station for transport to Moosburg, northeast of Munich.

This can mean only one thing, to us. If the Germans succeed in getting the R.A.F. men underway, they will march off the American officers next, and probably the other officers after them. There have been persistent stories recently of a Nazi determination to fight things out in their "Southern Redoubt," the mountain massif below Munich. They may still hope, desperately, that by taking enough hostages with them, and by threatening enough reprisals on the hostages, they can win personal safety for themselves. The stories say that Hitler already has issued a personal order for the shooting of all prisoners but that the army, perhaps because of their potential hostage value, has refused. In any event, regardless of any frightfulness the Nazis might contrive, siege conditions in the "redoubt" would be ghastly, and we are all determined on an escape attempt if we are marched out of here.

An added incentive to escape is the prospect of another trip in boxcars, locked up and completely at the mercy of allied aircraft. The Germans steadfastly refuse to mark their prisoner transports, and the men penned into the cars have no possibility of safety if the train is attacked from the air. We see more and more American aircraft every day, now, and it is quite obvious that they have absolute mastery of the sky over Germany. Yesterday, four Thunderbolts which had just "beat up" the railroad or some other target at Jueterbog, in plain sight from here, flew low over the camp and waggled their wings at us to the huge delight of a cheering mob of prisoners and the glum disgust of the Germans.

The only German planes we ever see are occasional fighters, includ-

ing the beautiful jet-propelled ships which streak across the sky like darts of light, and once in a while a Dornier pick-a-back combination flying a fearful course low down. The last German formation we saw was weeks ago, when about 300 fighter-bombers made for the Russian front and straggled back in disorder an hour or so later. The Germans at the moment can't protect anything they've got, and a trainload of prisoners would come just about last on the priority list, in any event.

The bets are that the Germans will never get the R.A.F. contingent to Moosburg, and may never even get them away from Luckenwalde station, where they are bivouacked like so many tramps tonight. Patton's Third Army is knifing across central Germany at such speed that the only railroad connection between north and south, twenty-four hours from now, will be through Czechoslovakia. The French who were outside the camp today say they could hear artillery, and tonight I think I can catch a low grumble of guns from Wittemberg, to the southwest. What is quite evident without leaving the camp is that fuel and ammunition dumps on the military proving ground between here and Jueterbog are being blown up to keep them out of our hands. There have been several big explosions today, and three or four fires which belched black smoke across miles of countryside.

Getting the R.A.F. to move was something of a task. Group Captain Willets and other senior officers had been moved out last night, under protest. This morning, when they were supposed to start off *en masse*, the R.A.F. contingent reported 300 men sick and unable to move. After considerable palaver, the Germans finally agreed to let them remain. The others were gradually herded by barracks into the sports field, where a gaggle of goons went through their belongings, checked their names, and started them for the station.

The R.A.F. bunch have become experts at delaying actions. As each barrack straggled toward the field, lugging its bundles, its carts, its blankets and its assorted impedimenta, individuals kept wandering off the field to return to the barracks for another cup of coffee. As they were gradually retrieved, others sauntered away. A German officer went into one barracks to get it moving, emerged three minutes later perspiring and doleful, and reported to his superior:

"I tell them to move. I tell them they will miss their train. They sit there and eat their breakfasts. They drink their coffee and eat their toast, and then they have some more. They do not care. I do not care. . . ."

It took several hours to clean the R.A.F. barracks. Meanwhile Koenig, the commandant of the officer's camp, mustered the "sick" for

inspection. They lined up in front of him, openly grinning, while several hundred Americans screamed encouragement from a few yards away. Individually, or in twos and fours and sixes, they were called up to explain their ailments. When Captain Montuis, the British doctor, felt that individual cases were not putting on a good enough act, he motioned to them behind Koenig's back to limp harder or to look more woebegone. The German doctor, an individual named Halbeck who could tie Hermann Goering for girth, roared with laughter during the entire proceeding, and even Major Gorlt was grinning. Nobody but Koenig, stuffed with his self-importance, took the whole thing seriously.

None of the Germans apparently thought to look for at least a half dozen R.A.F. men now hiding in the American barracks, for the others who dug a cave under a bunk and are now hiding out, for a few who disappeared into the Norwegian barracks, and for an undetermined number of others who must have slipped out of the marching column en route to the station. It's a safe bet the German's haven't the foggiest notion how many British are in camp or at the station at this moment.

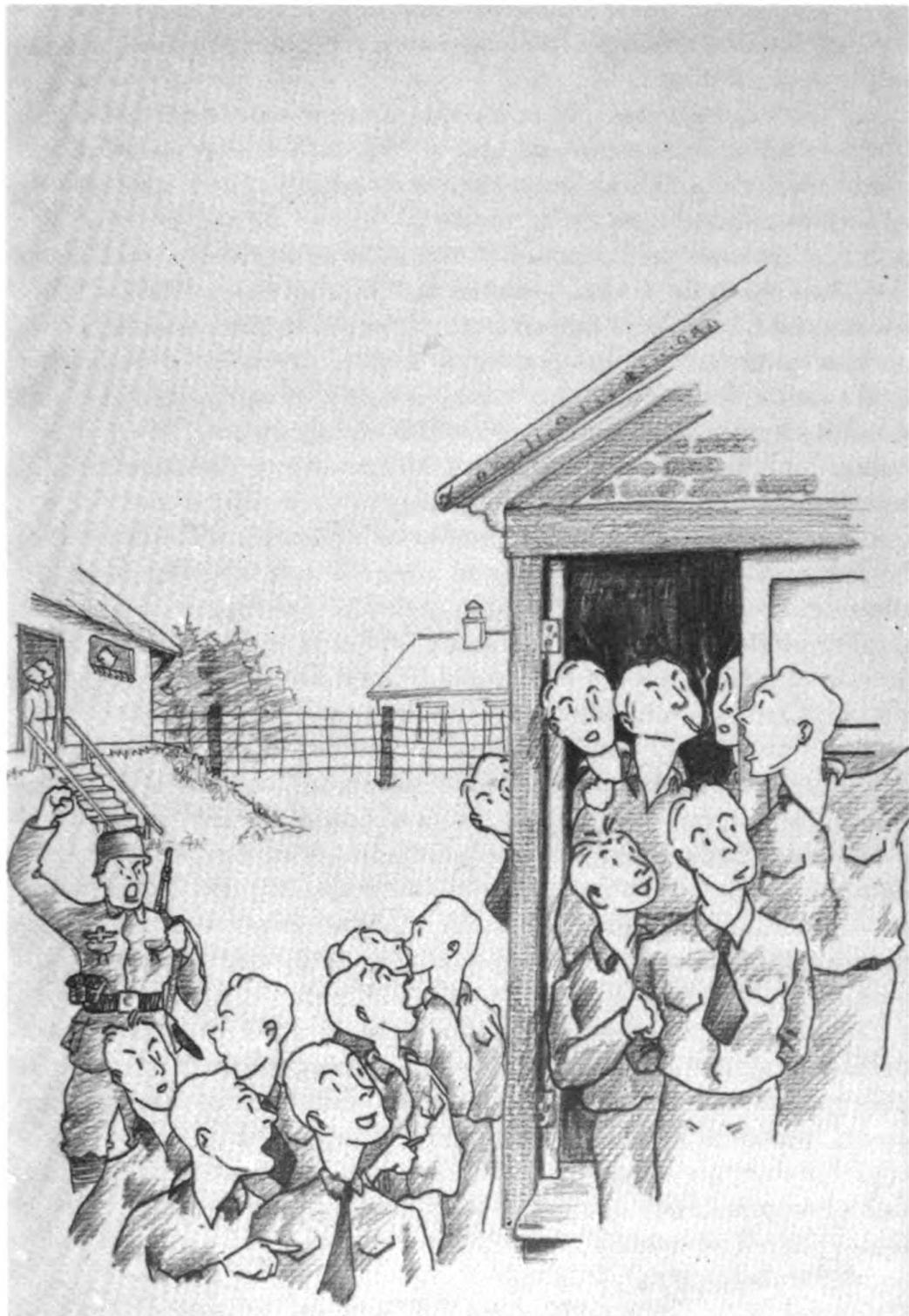
Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 13

THE death of Franklin D. Roosevelt shocked the camp today as no other event could possibly have done. German guards brought word in before breakfast. Any of them who had shown delight would have been torn to pieces. They didn't. A few seemed sorry. The rest are so steeped in their own hopeless chaos that they don't register emotion of any sort.

I had never fully realized what Roosevelt meant to the oppressed nations of Europe until the word of his death spread through camp. All day, Poles and Norwegians and French have been approaching individual Americans, shaking their hands and trying to express the sentiments which are written in their eyes.

General Ruge sent a message to Colonel Herte which concluded, "The world has lost a great man, and my own country a true friend." Wing Commander Smith, in charge of the British remnant remaining in camp, wrote, "We of the British Empire have lost an ardent and loyal friend . . . had our desires been granted he would have lived to see the fruits of the labor for which he strove so wholeheartedly and gallantly."

In the American barracks, Colonel Herte ordered a stand-by, had



Air Raid

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the announcement of the death read, and after it we all stood at attention for one silent minute. Somewhere in the maze of bunks, several people were sobbing.

A Polish captain came up to me this afternoon and said, "God give President Truman strength and vision." We all feel that way about it. I think, because we know better than most what vision it will take by all nations to restore sanity to tis world.

The air alarm has just sounded the all-clear after nine solid hours of alert. There were both Lightnings and Thunderbolts over the camp this afternoon, and they bombed and strafed two targets off to the south, sending up towering columns of gray smoke. It was even more of a thrill than day before yesterday, when we could see the target indicators of heavy formations of Fortresses and Liberators arching down at one time at four different points—toward Magdeburg, at Brandenburg, at Berlin, and at one point nearer than any of them which must be the Elbe crossing. The great thing about today's planes was that they were the fighter-bombers who operate in close contact with the armored columns. When you see them, the front itself is sweeping toward you.

We could clearly hear guns today. Even if they should be only German artillery "zeroing in" on road junctions against a coming attack, they are a portent of events which can't now be long delayed.

The 1,300 R.A.F. men are still at the station, feeding on soup from here and the contents of their Red Cross parcels, which the Germans permit them to cook along the tracks. The reason: no locomotive.

A French prisoner who was in town this afternoon said that great numbers of the R.A.F. had been out wandering around Luckenwalde last night, looking for food and drink, and that those of the mournful civilian population not interested in trading food tried to surrender to them.

At one point the German railway people called Halle, the great junction near Leipzig, and asked for a locomotive to be sent at once. They got a hollow laugh and the news that the American vanguard was already in the city's outskirts and that there was not even enough transport available to evacuate the ammunition of the garrison. The railroad workers at Luckenwalde told the Frenchman there certainly would be no locomotive available here for several days.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde

APRIL 14

SIGNS of the times:

Several guards told me today, one way or another, that the prisoners need not worry "when the American troops arrive," an event which everyone thinks will only be a matter of days, at the worst.

The Americans are within twenty-five miles on an airline, and according to the Frenchman who drives the camp bread truck, reconnaissance elements have already penetrated to the vicinity of Jueterbog, or eight to ten miles from here. Gunfire is plainly audible, and a few of the more hopeful prisoners are already stationed on the slope leading to the British latrine, best vantage point in camp, gazing into the west and southwest for the first signs of a liberating column.

Some of the guards insist that the entire camp zone has been declared a neutral area, and that the guards will fall back at the sight of the Americans, in order not to endanger the unarmed prisoners. This certainly would comply with the Geneva Convention, which provides that defenseless captured personnel must not be placed in jeopardy by the captor power, but since nobody has ever detected any particular tendency by the Germans to observe the convention, we are inclined to doubt this sudden rush of solicitude.

The more likely version is that the German camp authorities, with a garrison composed largely of *Volkssturm* and almost entirely of the unfit, will be unable to put up a fight. Some of the guards say that defense positions were assigned and everyone told to die at his post, but that the commandant finally had to bully two *Feldwebels* into volunteering to fire a demonstration burst apiece from two of the watchtower machine-guns. The guards say that when they hear these two bursts, they will know the Americans are almost here, that they will then fire a shot or two each into the air, and make for the woods. Most of them will be in civilian clothes five minutes after they reach cover, unless their commanding officers are very watchful. Dozens of guards wear civvies under their uniforms most of the time.

The Germans finally broke down and admitted today that they couldn't find a locomotive, and marched the 1,300-man R.A.F. contingent back from the station. The Americans met them at the compound gate with scratch music by the jazz band, which played "Hail, Hail the Gang's All Here" and other selections, and it was just like Old Home Week. The horse play covered a vast relief that it would be impossible for the Germans to subject the Luckenwalde prisoners to another of

those suicidal freight train journeys, or to hold them as hostages in some last despairing stand somewhere in Bavaria.

We are very lucky. Guards who arrived here from Hammelburg, where the remainder of Oflag 64 had ended its winter march, report that when American tanks penetrated to within a few miles of the place the entire camp was marched to Nuernberg, thence to Moosburg, and that dozens of other camps are now on the march all over central Germany. We still fear that when the final crisis arrives, the Germans will force us to march out, onto the chaotic roads and exposed to all the dangers of high-speed armored warfare. But every day we stay here is so much to the good.

When the R.A.F. returned, it developed that for forty-eight hours they had roamed almost at will through Luckenwalde, accumulating big stores of firewood, eggs, bread and potatoes. They were locked into box-cars each night, but had gouged holes in the floor and percolated out into the darkness more or less as they wanted. They say that one guard at the end of the string of cars last night actually was giving directions like "to the right for the latrine, to the left for escape." An undetermined number took advantage of his advice.

Goebbels' weekly article in *Das Reich*, which is far and away the best publication in Germany, says today that the war is in its last days and that the Fuehrer will decide "*die Wende*"—the turn. Most of the Germans hereabouts think this means he will decide when to surrender. A few, in a desperate flurry of hope, maintain that he has one more trick up his sleeve and will come out with some frightful engine of warfare which will multiply the slaughter. Even these half admit that it is much too late for anything like that, and agree that any new weapon which killed a few thousand more British, Russians or Americans, would simply aggravate the sufferings of Germany once she admits defeat.

One guard told me that Hitler has been quoted as saying, "May God pardon me for the last four days of this war!" The guard added wildly, "My God, why doesn't he give us some chance for the future." This rumor is typical of the semi-hysteria into which most of our guards have fallen.

Nazi horror tactics no longer have the effect they once did. When the papers carried the announcement of the death sentence on General Lasch, commander of the Koenigsberg garrison, who surrendered to the Russians after weeks of gallant defense, and added the blunt statement that his entire "*Sippe*"—all his relatives—were to be held equally responsible, a German officer commented to me, "It's mediae-

val. The Nazis are barbarous beasts who are hurling us back into the dark ages."

None of us who are able to talk to the Germans bother much any more about concealing our feelings. I told him the prisoners were well aware of the story of Buchenwald prison camp, which we have heard over the secret radios now for several days, and that any nation which tolerated a Buchenwald or a Dachau belonged in the dark ages.

He made the usual untrue assertion that he had never had any idea what went on inside concentration camps. In point of fact, all Germany has known of Dachau since 1933, and most of it knew of Buchenwald by the end of 1938, when thousands of Jews were sent there and tortured to death in the pogrom following the shooting of vom Rath in the embassy in Paris. The devil himself probably didn't know the details of torture conceived by the Nazi genius, but the German people knew enough to do something, if they had been minded.

The Nazis are trying desperately to induce every city to fight to the last, thus depriving the Americans of vital road and railroad junctions. The papers day before yesterday displayed prominently an announcement issued jointly by Keitel, Himmler and Bormann—in other words by army, secret police and party, carrying the authority of the only functioning entities left in Germany, which read:

"Cities lie at important traffic junctions. They must therefore be defended to the last degree, and must be held, without any attention to promises or threats which may be made by emissaries or through the enemy radio. The designated commandant in each city is held personally responsible for the execution of this order. If these commandants violate this soldierly duty and task, they will be condemned to death, as will all civilian officials who seek to turn the commandant aside from his duty or to hinder him in the fulfilment of his task."

In a supplementary order, Himmler says:

"The enemy is seeking to mislead German towns to surrender. He is trying to terrify the population with advanced armored cars, with the threat that the town in question will be shot to bits by approaching tanks or artillery. No German city will be declared open. Each village and each city will be defended and held with all means at its disposal. Every German man responsible for a town's defense who offends against this self-understood national duty, loses honor and life."

The outer offices of the camp are now plastered with big placards threatening death for desertion. One of them proclaims that "The Oder is our Main Battle Line" and warns that soldiers who have been separated from their units must report immediately for mustering in

hit-or-miss companies to be thrown into battle. Any soldier now found wandering behind the front faces drumhead courtmartial and "execution on the spot."

Another placard announces the sentence and execution of four German soldiers, including one lieutenant, by a "flying court martial" established in the Third Army Zone to combat desertions.

That sort of thing should demonstrate even to the Nazis themselves that it's no use any more. The soldiers are no longer fighters, taken as a mass. Their temper is uncertain, and when they get the chance they surrender, as tens of thousands have been doing in the west. The cities are not interested in the sort of insane defense which must inevitably reduce them to rubble, and finally obliterate all hope for a population which has little enough to hope for.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 15

THE camp awakened this morning at a terrific pitch of excitement, partly in the sudden mass conviction that this is the climax week, and partly because last night we had seen, for the first time, the infernal spectacle of a big R.A.F. night raid.

We watched the Potsdam attack, which we estimate to have involved over 500 heavy bombers, from a distance of at least twenty miles, and it was so terrifying, so overpowering, that R.A.F. pilots who had been on dozens of bigger raids stood aghast at the hell which airpower creates on earth.

It is a pity the target had to be Potsdam, which always had an air about it such as only a palace town can have. But Potsdam is an important communications center in the war zone, and the Germans insist on continuing the hopeless fight, and the whole damned war has now reached such an insane pitch that nothing much matters any more except putting an end to it.

The raid came at about midnight, and from the time the first planes began boring through the darkness over the camp it was obvious this was no routine raid. The noise of the planes was overpowering, and even at our distance the explosions of the first bombs were so heavy that the ground shook and shuddered under our feet.

The spectacle was fantastically beautiful: flak and searchlights from the ground, target flares by the hundreds, green red or yellow, and angry bursts of the photo flash bombs low over the smoking inferno of



Chimney Pot Row

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Potsdam. Every so often came the great, slow glow of a block buster, fixing in lurid red-orange for a second the thick smoke pall which belched out from Potsdam across Berlin and toward the Russian lines. The smoke glowed redly in the flames from the ground, even during the lulls when there were no block busters and no photo flash bombs to accent this holocaust of destruction. It would take a Turner gone mad to paint such a scene. I find it hopeless to describe because there is nothing in my experience before last night with which I can hope to compare it. I think I shall always be able to close my eyes and see that infernal sky again.

The Germans today say that Potsdam is absolutely flat, which is probably an exaggeration. The officers are furious about the raid, and there are new rumors that Hitler, who cancelled one prisoner repatriation when the western allies bombed Dresden, theretofore spared, has again ordered reprisals on us. Only the poor old guards, with their bits of civilian clothing sticking out from under their uniforms, seem to show no emotion. They are drained of it, and want only the chance to go home in peace.

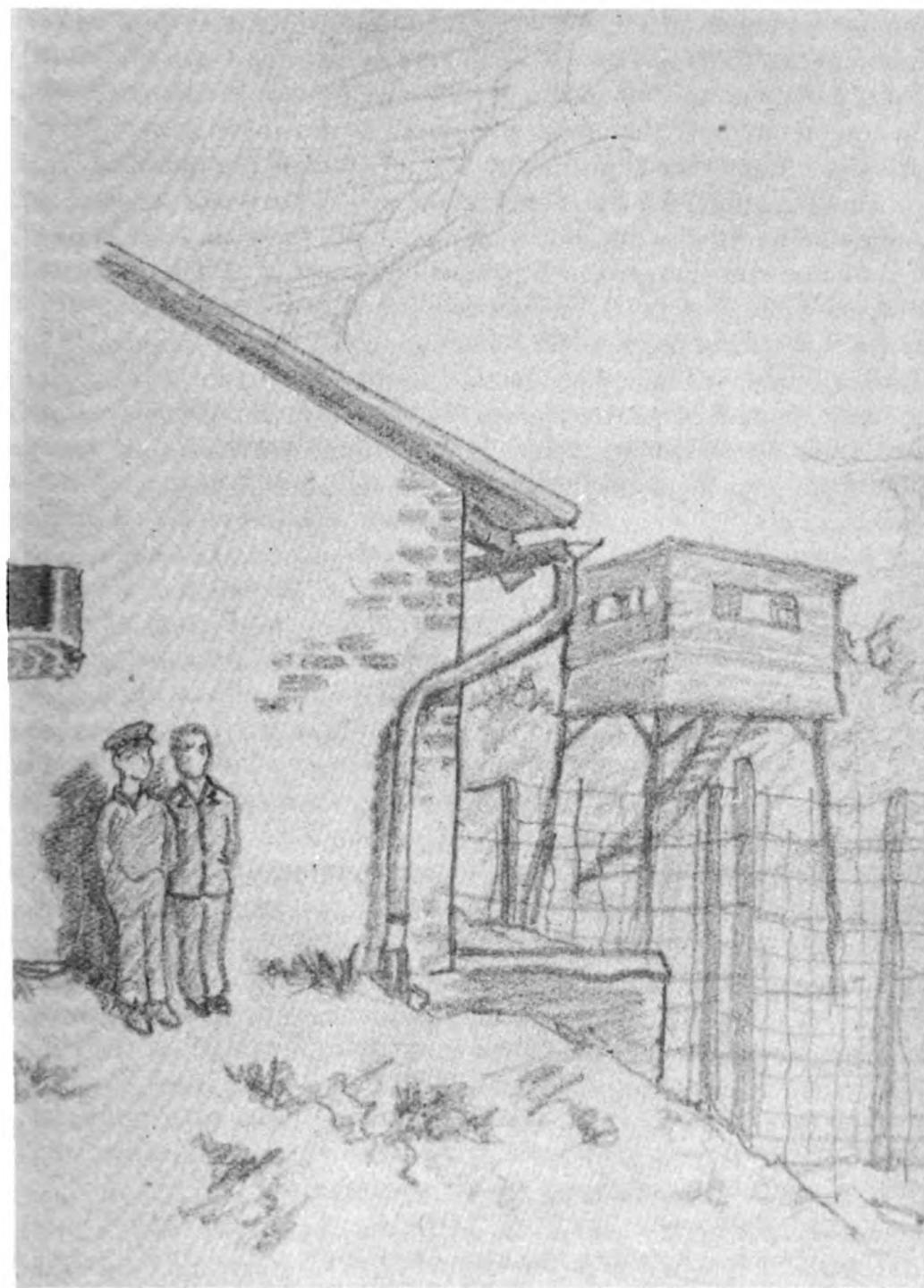
We may be too optimistic in looking on this as the climax week for us, because much depends on whether the camp lies on the line of advance and whether the Germans can spare enough reserves to halt the Americans for a time short of the immediate approaches to Berlin. They are desperately using every device of propaganda, in particular the fear of deportation to Siberia, to drum up one last flurry of feeling. They are picturing the American troops as second only to the Russian "Asiatic sub-humans" in brutality.

They may hold, and we may have to wait another two or three weeks for the day of liberation, but as we watched from the British latrine slope today we could see shell bursts and smoke pillars on the hills to the west, and in any event it won't be very long.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 16

THE eastern horizon tonight is flashing with distant gunfire which ripples from north to south like summer lightning gone wild. The Russian offensive has started. If anything were needed to seal the doom of Germany, this is it. I'm so excited that I'm close to tears, and so is many another.

Effective resistance now can't last over a month. If the Nazis hold



The Watch by the Latrine—Luckenwalde, April

out in Berlin or in the southern mountains, they may prolong the fighting for a time, but the Germans are now fighting a two-front battle along a narrow corridor in which they have no room to manoeuver or to mass reserves—if they have any reserves—and they can't prevent a junction. Once that happens any further resistance is sheer insanity.

Unfortunately, the Nazis are capable of just that, and they are also capable of herding us out of Luckenwalde onto the roads, which would expose thousands of unarmed, physically weakened men to a hundred dangers. The thought is very sobering in this otherwise excited moment. Liberation is imminent. The junction between Americans and Russians may well take place in this neighborhood, and if we remain in camp we shall be relatively safe—safe from everything except retaliation from defeated Nazi troops or something of the sort. If we are forced out onto the roads there will be hundreds who won't live to see freedom.

We got some indication of what the roads will be like tonight when Pfc. Phillip Schwartz of the Bronx, "Man of Confidence" for 2,300 Americans from Stalag XI-A at Alten Grabow, near Magdeburg, arrived here looking for help. Schwartz provisionally is also representing 1,200 British soldiers and 1,800 British Indians from the same camp, who with the Americans were marched out five days ago and since then have been plodding east and south, living in the open without blankets, without proper food and in some cases even without shoes. Many of them have dysentery and some have pneumonia.

If they had stayed in their camp, they would have been free men by now. The goons preferred to subject them to the dangers of marching, although it must be obvious to them that even a march will only keep the prisoners in their hands a few more days. No provision was made for billeting or food along the way. The men have been given a quarter loaf of bread and a little margarine each day—nothing more. The Germans have made no effort to identify the column to protect it from strafing by allied fighters, to whom it must inevitably look like a German infantry regiment.

Last night the column finally reached the neighborhood of Annaberg, east of Bitterfeld and on the east bank of the Elbe, and Schwartz traveled all day today on a German tank truck, in charge of a German noncom, to try to obtain emergency rations and medical supplies. With permission of the Germans, Colonel Oakes and Sergeant Gasperich, who as "Man of Confidence" is in charge of parcels here, turned over 1,600 Red Cross parcels and what medical supplies were available, and Schwartz started off again to find his men.

Tomorrow he will try to return for more supplies, although there is little left, and for doctors, if the Germans will permit them to be sent. There are several idle Italian medical officers here who could be sent in a pinch.

None of us actually expects to see Schwartz again. In the chaos which now prevails, he will be lucky to reach Annaberg again with his first load.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 17

HITLER'S desperation in this decisive hour stands nakedly in every line of the proclamation with which he greeted the Russian offensive. Because it's probably the last proclamation he'll get an opportunity to issue, a full translation is worthwhile:

"**Soldiers of the Eastern Front!**

"For the last time, the Jewish-Bolshevik death-enemy has gone over to the attack in all his mass. He seeks to shatter Germany and to obliterate our people. You soldiers from the east know yourselves, for the most part, what fate threatens, particularly for German women, girls and children. Old men and children are murdered, and the women and girls are debased to garrison whores. The remainder march to Siberia.

"We have anticipated this blow, and since January of this year everything has been done to build up a strong front. A powerful artillery engages the enemy. The losses of our infantry have been made up by countless new units. Alarm units, new battalions and *Volkssturm* strengthen the front. The Bolshevik this time will experience the ancient fate of Asia—he must and shall bleed himself out before the capital of the German Reich.

"Whoever in this moment fails in his duty is a traitor to our people. The regiment or the divisions, which leave their positions will be acting so miserably that they must shame themselves before the women and children who stand firm in our cities under the bomb terror.

"Watch above all else the traitorous few officers and soldiers, who to save their miserable lives, will be fighting against us in Russian pay, perhaps even in German uniform. Whoever orders you to retreat, unless you know him well, must be immediately taken prisoner and if necessary, killed on the spot, regardless of what rank he has.

"If in the coming days and weeks, every soldier on the eastern front

fulfills his duty, Asia's last storm attack will break up, just as at the end the break-in of our enemy in the west will shatter.

"Berlin remains German, Vienna shall again be German, and Europe shall never be Russian.

"Build a sworn comradeship in defense, not of the empty conception of *Vaterland*, but of our homeland, your women, your children, and therewith our future.

"In this hour the whole German people looks to you, my fighters of the east, and hopes only that through your steadfastness, your fanaticism, through your weapons and under your leadership the Bolshevik assault will drown in a bath of blood. At the moment when fate took from this world the greatest war criminal of all times, the turning point of this war shall be decided.

"Signed, Adolf Hitler."

The reference to President Roosevelt is typical of Hitler's personal antipathy to him. Even in the midst of his last crisis, the Fuehrer couldn't resist a gratuitous blow at him. The Nazi press, the days after the President's death, were full of the most violent diatribes against him, but they left all the Germans around here completely cold. No guard to my knowledge made any unfriendly remark, and the camp authorities even gave Father Glennon permission to hold a memorial service "on condition that you make no demonstration."

The Nazi propaganda machine is still making desperate attempts to stiffen morale in the west by picturing the British and American armies as "just as bad as the Russians." Today's *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* page ones an article headlined "Eisenhower on the Same Level as the Soviets," charging that the Allied Supreme Commander was systematically starving Germans in the occupied areas and would not only make no food available to them but had actually driven off cattle for his own armies.

That sort of thing has long since lost its effectiveness. The average German is desperately afraid of the Russian "sub-humans." This terror may have been responsible for some former cracks in the eastern front, and it could be decisive in this climax battle. He is not terrified of the western enemies, although he is bitter toward them for "stabbing him in the back" when he was "saving the world from Communism." The Germans around here have long since given up praying for victory. They would settle right now for a chance to be taken prisoner by the Americans.

Over 400 German wounded from the eastern front were brought

through camp today to be deloused before continuing their trip. Most of them were young boys. They were in bad shape, and they had received only very primitive treatment for their wounds. The speed with which these wounded had reached here made me realize, even more than the artillery on the night horizon, how close the two fronts are to our prison.

A lot of French prisoners were combed out of camp this morning to work on field fortifications, presumably near Luckenwalde. There is no doubt in my mind that prisoners of all nationalities, particularly those in isolated *Arbeitskommandos* who have no camp organization to back them up, are being forced into this labor, which is strictly against the Geneva Convention.

American fighter-bombers gave nearby Jueterbog a thorough plastering this afternoon, interrupting the daily softball game between a Canadian and an American team.

The baseball season at home must start today.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 18

AN AMERICAN sergeant who was brought into the enlisted men's compound today told the GI's that he had been taken prisoner only six miles from Jueterbog, or under fifteen from here. He was marched from the front to permanent prisoner camp in five and a half hours. It took some of us more than that many weeks.

The Germans say that what reached the Jueterbog area was only a reconnaissance force, and that the closest point at which the Americans are present in strength is twenty-six miles away, at Wittemberg. Hauptmann Braune, the security officer, says that the *Wehrmacht* is counter-attacking all along the eastern front, that "we, like the Russians, have everything staked on this battle," and that if the British and Americans occupy the rest of Germany while the battle rages in the east, it is at least preferable to losing it to the Red Army.

The American medium bombers were over us in strength for the first time today. Two waves, totalling seventy-two planes, passed directly across the camp *en route* to Jueterbog, and they were so low they must have seen us dancing and waving to them. They started big fires, because the smoke columns at Jueterbog were heavy and strong.

We got a dozen recruits today, all U.S.A.A.F. pilots or air crew men shot down near Berlin. They brought the exciting news that targets

are getting so scarce in Germany that the Fortresses recently have had to return with their bombs from several missions, and the comforting word that the air force is well aware that the Germans will have prisoners on the march, and has ordered fighter pilots to stop strafing the roads.

One of them, Captain Monroe Hotaling of Los Angeles, had a rare break when he was shot down April 10 during a raid on Oranienburg, up beyond Berlin. Hotaling came down at the edge of Goering's Karinhall estate, was picked up by a couple of special guards, and presently found himself confronted by none other than the *Reichsmarschall*, who had been deep in a conference of some sort with eleven assorted generals.

Hotaling was lucky enough to find the great man in expansive humor. Goering, who showed childish delight at being recognized by the American flier, complimented him on the "integrity and discipline" of the American air forces, remarked wistfully that he had never been able to turn them back, and finally invited him to dinner. Hotaling says that the robust marshal does himself mighty well in the food line, including on that occasion consomme, roast goose, roast venison, assorted vegetables, Mosel wine, coffee, cognac and Havana cigars.

Goering kept him overnight, then sent him off on his first lap to prison behind a team of fine stallions presented to him by Field Marshal Mannerheim, of Finland.

Hotaling said that German officers all along the route had been notified in advance that "a friend of the *Reichsmarschall*" was coming, and that he was well treated everywhere, thanks to Goering's whim. After glancing over our quarters at Luckenwalde, he said he guessed his luck had now run out.

Even here, however, everyone knew about him. Mannerheim's stallions are well-known in Germany and Major Gorlt, old cavalryman that he is, asked to have Hotaling pointed out and remarked it was a pity he hadn't brought the horses along to Luckenwalde so everyone could see them.

I did something I'd never have dared, a couple of weeks ago. I was standing beside Hotaling, and without thinking, remarked:

"Yes, Major, but if he had, the horses would have ended up in the soup."

For a moment the major looked puzzled. Then suddenly he grinned, said "Ah, a joke," and walked off.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 19

THERE has been heavy fighter-bomber and artillery activity on the horizon about fifteen miles west of here all day today, and forty or fifty people crowd the British latrine slope most of the time, looking for signs of an American advance. There are all sorts of wild stories, emanating largely from the French in the kitchen, about big American advances toward Berlin from the great bend in the Elbe. Unfortunately we know nothing definite, because the allied broadcasts speak of no big actions on this part of the front.

Some of us are beginning to suspect that the Russians at Yalta asked and obtained the right to take Berlin by themselves, and that the Elbe was fixed as the dividing line in this part of Germany. This theory has a logical support in the obvious desirability of having a wide river between two strange armies advancing full tilt at each other. With all the good will in the world, incidents would be unavoidable without a substantial, well-defined line of demarcation.

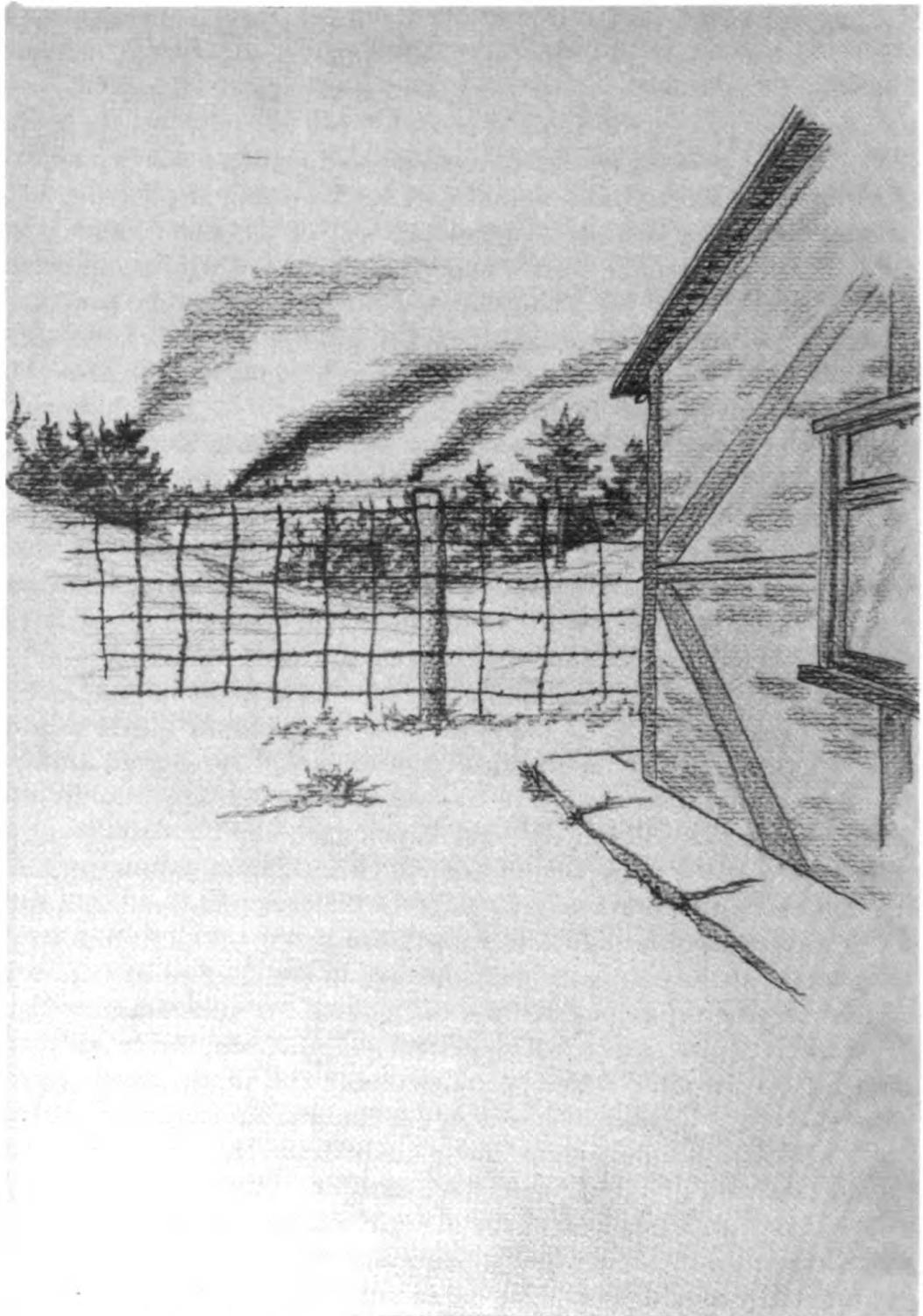
The thought is a little dampening to all our high hopes, if only because it means delay. It was clear to us that there was little to stop the Americans if they had continued at top speed for Berlin, and we certainly would have been free by now if they had done so. At the worst, however, it will only be a few days longer, and the radio said the other day that there are British and American liaison officers with all the Russian tank spearheads, assigned to see that prisoners are cared for and promptly evacuated after liberation.

News of the big Russian break-through in the Cottbus-Bautzen sector has everyone at high pitch, and the general enthusiasm was further heightened this afternoon when around 400 American heavy bombers staged a concentrated raid near Wittemberg and unidentified targets off to the east of it, possibly in support of the Russian advance.

The goons are becoming increasingly humble. They even say "please, sir" and things like that, these days.

I've just had a last look at the eastern horizon before "lights out," and the gun flashes seem much nearer.

The story should be told, as far as we're concerned, by the end of this week.



The Russians Are Coming—Luckenwalde, April

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 20

LATE last night we were tipped off that the Red Army had broken through to about thirty miles south and twenty-five miles southeast of here, and that the German commandant had decided to move all 17,000 men out of the camp, on foot and in carts, on the pretext of "saving us from the Russians" by marching us to the American lines.

Things are moving so fast that it's quite obvious we would never reach there. Probably the column or columns would be scattered like chaff by the fast-moving battle, and thousands might well be killed. The only purpose such a move would serve would be protection of a few Germans who fear falling into Russian hands and who fear what the *Gestapo* would do to them if they deserted the camp and us.

The Germans blindly assume that allied prisoners all fear what the Russians would do to them on liberation, which is about as far from the mark as it could be. In point of fact, everyone I have talked to, except for the Poles, is looking forward with the keenest anticipation to the arrival of the first Red Army forces. We have heard so much about them that we want to shake hands, and we imagine they have just about the same feeling for us.

It is now afternoon, and nothing has yet happened. This may mean that the Russian spearheads have been temporarily checked, or that the commandant has come out of his funk. It's hardly likely they'll try to move us late in the day, and if they wait until tomorrow they'll have to contend with a mass sit-down strike which ought to guarantee a complete ball-up of the proceedings.

Plenty else has been happening all day. The artillery on the eastern front, whose flashes and grumbling were very plain last night, has been drowned out since 10:00 A.M. by what somebody just called "the damnedest aid raid ever seen." The target markers have been going down almost without break in a great arc stretching from Berlin, due north, around to Mageburg in the west. The targets quite obviously are communications. Most of the bomb-bursts have been inside the horizon, and the earth has been shuddering in one long spasm.

Many of the formations, from their direction as they roared in, certainly came from Ira Eaker's Fifteenth Air Force in Italy. The remainder, as usual, courtesy of Jimmy Doolittle. Stage Manager, "Tooey" Spaatz. None of us recalls that the Mediterranean Fortress and Liberators ever penetrated to Berlin before. Today they and the

Eighth have staged a show in full view of both fronts which must sound to the hard-pressed Germans like the opening of the doors of doom.

Everyone is calling the raid "Hitler's Birthday Present." Tomorrow is surely his last anniversary.

The radio has just announced the suicide by poison of the Lord Mayor of Leipzig, his wife and his daughter. There will be a tremendous wave of suicides in the final German debacle, and it may be the easiest way to dispose of the bulk of the war criminals. The suicide of an entire family shows a terrible fanaticism: watching this hopeless struggle waged by a people who know they are licked as no nation has ever been licked before, you marvel at the gripping power of this fanaticism, and wonder whether Germany can ever be "reformed" within the lifetime of anyone now fighting.

11:00 P.M. There are all sorts of rumors, including a report that Russian parachutists have landed between here and Jueterbog. One thing is plainly evident, on the testimony of our own eyes and ears. The Russians are on the advance everywhere in this area, from due south to due north. They can't be more than twenty miles away anywhere along the arc.

There is constant and heavy artillery barraging, and the night clouds are red with the glow of fires. We have even seen some tracer in the distance. German Focke Wulffs, Messerschmitts and jet fighters have been shuttling back and forth trying to stem the tide. Somebody remarked that they must bank pretty sharply these days to stay over Reich territory.

I was chatting with a couple of prisoners outside the barracks just about dusk tonight when a German guard on patrol in the compound came up, watched us wistfully from a few feet away, finally made up his mind, approached closer, and asked:

"Do you know anything new, comrades?"

This may well be our last day of prison. We are expecting the Russians hourly, and the whole camp is a-seethe. There are thousands of German troops in the area, but the Russians are close on all sides but the west, and the Germans simply can't stop them.

There was heavy gunfire just east of here at 7:00 A.M. today, but it gradually receded as though a Red reconnaissance element had been temporarily pushed back. Then gradually it swelled again, and the front in that direction is certainly within ten miles. Many fires are burning fiercely within sight of the camp.

Rumor is running wild, including a story that the Americans are

closing in front the west, which is possible, and an elaboration putting them only three kilometers away, which is highly improbable.

Many of the guards have been sent off to fight, lugging their knapsacks, their rifles, their French gas masks and their little satchels and looking very glum. The French prisoners who get down to town say that the Germans started to pull out of Luckenwalde at 2:00 A.M. today, found Red armored cars patrolling the *Reichsautobahn* just north of here, and came back to re-man their defensive positions.

For the first time Russian planes put in an appearance this afternoon. They were four low-flying, raw-boned single motored machines which the R.A.F. men identify as *Stormoviks*, the assault planes which operate in close contact with the tanks and act as flying artillery during the great Russian advances.

Seven freshly caught Russian prisoners were brought in this afternoon and taken to the Red Army compound down the camp street from us. They were finely set-up fellows, well-dressed and obviously well-fed. They strolled down the street behind their guard grinning broadly while we all cheered from behind the wire and threw them enough cigarettes to last them many more days than they'll need stock up for.

After they had passed a German guard, loaded up for the front, came plodding down the street, spied an odd cigarette still lying in the roadway, put down his satchel, and started to pick it up. There was a great chorus of "Nix, Nix" from the prisoners.

The guard looked up like a small boy caught in the jam closet, wearily picked up his satchel and went off, leaving the cigarette lying.

How times do change.

You couldn't help pitying the poor devil, starting off all alone for the raging front, smokeless, probably foodless, and certainly hopeless.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 21

WE ARE FREE.

In those three words is packed an emotion so strong that, hours after the event, it is almost impossible to think coherently enough to put a few disjointed words onto paper.

Our guards deserted us this morning—officers and men alike—in cars, on bicycles, in carts and in a ragged little column of tail-enders which pulled out at noon after glumly handing over the camp to the prisoners.

Tonight, although there is heavy fighting in the woods on three sides of camp, and although an SS detachment emplaced near the hospital has threatened to shoot us all if we show a light, make any demonstration, or interfere in any way with the fighting, we turn in certain that tomorrow will bring the first Russians and with them our official liberation.

This is the climax to an emotional crescendo which could only occur at a time like this among men who have been prisoners—zeros—for anything up to five and a half years, who have been subjected to insult, indignity and ill-treatment, and who now can see before their eyes the debacle of the enemy around them.

Since late last night, when the sound of the artillery was quite clearly moving westward both to north and south of us, and when big fires burned brightly just beyond the pine woods which cut off the outside world—the fires were so close that we could see the flames themselves—I have been, I guess, close to hysteria. The strain on the men from Dunkirk must have been almost unbearable. Their faces tonight are the happiest I ever have seen.

The prisoners' own organization came aboveground without a hitch, and incidentally provided me with one moment of personal satisfaction which compensates for a lot.

The Germans had started drifting off in mid-morning, several of them after making the rounds of prisoners they knew by sight and reminding them "how nice I have been to you." The guards on the officers' compound turned over the keys to the gates just before noon.

A short time later Colonel Lutter, the commandant, sent for all the allied senior officers. The only one who could be found was Lieutenant Colonel Oakes, our second in seniority—the others were at an undercover organizational meeting. Colonel Oakes took me along to the gate as interpreter.

Lutter stood in a drizzling rain just outside the main gate of the camp, looking tired but as cold-lipped and emotionless as ever. A few feet off, lined up on the cobblestones, were the last platoon of guards, damp and dispirited.

Lutter curtly demanded a guarantee that order would be preserved, that the prisoners would maintain complete discipline, stay in the camp and, above all, provide no hindrance to the defense of Luckenwalde. Translating for Colonel Oakes, I assured him that a complete military organization existed, that every man had long known what he was to do, and that all nationalities understood they were under the command of General Ruge, as senior allied officer.

At that precise moment about 100 GI's wearing white armbands marched out the gate in formation. Lutter drew himself up.

"You say nobody will leave the camp," he blurted out. "What, may I ask, are these people doing coming out the gate?"

Oakes looked at them and grinned, then sobered and said:

"That is the Provost Marshal's guard which is taking over the patrol of the camp from you."

Lutter quite obviously was thunderstruck at the organization which had grown up behind his back. He should have been impressed by the smartness of the P.M. detachment, which marched infinitely better than any Germans I have seen for many a long week. He seemed a little dazed as he saluted stiffly and left us, and Colonel Oakes and I agreed that the look on his face made up for a lot we'd undergone.

Colonel Lutter and his platoon of outworn men splashed away into the dreary rainstorm.

The new camp administration meanwhile had begun functioning with a smoothness for which nobody could have hoped. There was no disorder beyond a descent on the potato storeroom by a crowd of Frenchmen who were soon stopped by the patrols, and a considerable amount of barbed-wire uprooting between compounds, all of which classed as a gesture of free men and bothered no one at all.

The guards have taken over all gates, and movement, even inside the camp, will be strictly limited to those of us who have business and who have been provided with passes. There are big white cloths hung at the corners of the perimeter and at the gates, in the hope that it will be respected as a neutral zone if the fighting closes in still more. Big panels spelling out "P.O.W." have been laid out on the sport field to identify us to friendly aircraft. Inside the camp the color scheme is somewhat gayer. Improvised flags of all the United Nations have been hung out along the camp street, and the roadway itself has been a bedlam of tears, laughter, hugs, national dances and sheer high jinks.

The job of taking over the camp could not have been done with such smoothness if the British and American enlisted men had not been so beautifully organized inside the confines of their own compounds. The regular companies, the guard details and the dozens of special units assigned to supply, transport, communications and the like, were all ready for the officers named to command them, and we are already a going, if jerry-built, concern. The Germans destroyed a lot of installations like the telephone exchange and made an effort to burn papers they couldn't take away, but we are hopeful that communications will be repaired within a day or two, and even the first glance

makes it obvious that there is a lot of documentary evidence on hand for the intelligence staff to work on. We still have water and light, miraculous to relate.

The day has been so busy that nobody has a full idea of what has happened. To me it is just a disjointed series of brief, bright pictures which my eye caught up out of the pandemonium of liberation.

I remember the four French prisoners who had been working at a farm near here who turned up with a pushcart full of white rabbits acquired somewhere en route, and the other group with a wagonload of lettuces.

I remember the four Russians who have been careening up and down the camp street all afternoon and evening in a car they "liberated" somewhere outside the camp.

I remember the bottle of warm champagne I helped a few Frenchmen consume at breakfast time, because we knew this would be our day.

I remember a considerable number of prisoners seen this afternoon who obviously had put their hands on more drink, and much stronger drink, than I.

I remember the prisoners who came in from outside with all sorts of abandoned German arms, including two machine-guns, all of which we confiscated at the gate.

I remember the first trickle of slave laborers—"displaced persons," they seem to be called now—asking and getting admission from the guards at the gate, and the German civilians who came for sanctuary or to beg potatoes and were refused. We pity them, in a way, but we can't help them.

I remember one forlorn little prison guard who must have slipped away from the column and who came back to surrender to us, and the handful of armed soldiers who slipped through the wire with their weapons, including two *Panzerfausts*, and asked us to lock them up.

I remember the German General who took time out from the battle to rush up to the gate and warn that he could reoccupy the camp any time he wanted to. I hope the little show of bombast helped his morale.

There has been fighting all day within earshot, and we have even heard the clatter of tank treads off beyond the woods. Occasionally there were lulls during which everything was quiet as the grave. The Germans still seem determined to fight for the area, and there are troops and guns in all the woods—too near us—including one anti-tank gun emplaced less than 300 yards from the camp hospital.

A patrol of nineteen SS men strode up to the hospital early this evening and demanded that prisoners be furnished to dig trenches. They were taken aback at the fact that the German guards had fled, and finally accepted the argument that prisoners could not be made to work on military installations. They went off after threatening to shoot 100 prisoners if there is any overt act, and since then the commandant of the entire SS unit has expanded the threat to include the whole camp.

This creates a very ticklish situation because in their present desperate mood, the SS would be quite capable of opening fire on us, and there are so many men of so many nationalities inside here that control at the best is loose. If enough German officers had remained behind to handle the business of negotiating with the combat troops, it would be much better. As it is, we are at the mercy of any excitable junior commander in a situation which is completely chaotic and in which any moment may bring the crisis.

Unless the Germans pull out overnight to escape encirclement, the situation will remain critical until allied troops fight their way in, and the camp might at any time be overrun by the battle. The result would inevitably be a shambles.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 22

AT 6:00 o'clock this morning a tiny Russian armored car which looked somehow like a kid's foot-pedal runabout brought to 17,000 allied prisoners here the first tangible proof that they are free men again—that they are no longer so many zeros to be cuffed around and mistreated.

The car whizzed down the main street, depositing a captain at the commandant's house where General Ruge is now living, and came to a final halt by the Russian compound. It touched off bedlam from the moment it entered the gate, bringing thousands of prisoners tumbling half-dressed out of the barracks. From the Russians it got a welcome which the driver of the car certainly won't forget.

He was unwise enough to climb out from his armor through a small trap door in the bottom of the vehicle, to shake hands with the first Red Army prisoners who ran up. Immediately he was pounded, hugged, kissed, and then, as the crowd grew to mob proportions, grabbed bodily by those nearest him and hurled repeatedly fifteen feet into the air in a Soviet version of blanket tossing, without the blanket. When they finally let him down for breath he saw his chance and

popped back into the armored car, conducting the remainder of his conversation through the slit in the armor in front of the driver's seat.

The little car touched off a celebration which has been going on without let-up all day as new contingents of Russians swept through on their way to Berlin and detoured to the camp, as they told us, "just because we want to shake your hands." This first day of contact has been on the most friendly basis imaginable. The Russians are quite openly delighted to see us and delighted at the chance to liberate us. Our feelings toward them are indescribable. There will be celebrations in the world's big capitals when Germany finally capitulates, and when the war in the Far East ends in its turn, but for sheer emotion this day is the war's high point for me and the rest of Luckenwalde's thousands.

The Russians who have been bursting into camp all day are the armored spearhead, the famous tank units, shock artillery and guards assault troops who have been cutting the German front to pieces ever since Stalingrad. They are a hell-for-leather outfit which stops for nothing, and which leaves big pockets of Germans behind to be mopped up later by the supporting infantry and guns. Exactly that has happened in this case. Our new friends have disappeared to a man toward Berlin, where their comrades have already penetrated into the center of the city from east and northeast, and there are still big German units around here which must be cleaned out or forced to surrender.

That became evident before the morning had gotten well started. The first armored car departed about a half hour after its arrival with General Ruge inside and Colonel Herte, Senior American Officer, perched precariously on top. The two officers were being taken to the Red Army commander for this sector.

A few hundred yards outside the camp gate the party rounded a turn and found themselves bearing down on a German armored car, a much heavier vehicle which boasted a thirty-seven millimeter gun. The Russians promptly opened fire, and as the Germans fired back Herte did a prudent dive into the ditch. He was congratulating himself on his relative safety when the Russian car suddenly shifted into high gear and thundered off, bearing General Ruge to parts unknown. The Germans had meanwhile deserted their car and vanished into the woods. Colonel Herte picked himself up and returned grinning to camp as Luckenwalde's first combat veteran.

The night which preceded the Russian arrival had been full of excitement, climax of which came just before midnight when a Focke Wulff screamed across the compound just above the roofs, strafing something beyond us and drawing heavy tracer fire in return. For a

moment everyone thought some bitter German was taking out his anger on us, and we came out of our bunks in a rush. The bullets all went over.

There was a lot of small arms and artillery fire close to Luckenwalde, probably in the town itself, and it seemed likely that the fighting would involve the camp area before dawn, but fortunately the Germans in the woods hereabouts began pulling out around 2 A.M. We heaved relieved sighs as we heard their harness jangling off through the forest. Since darkness, the Russian prisoners had been sending out patrols armed with weapons hidden in their barracks, shooting up any Germans they came across. One SS man who came into camp alone was badly beaten before the Provost Marshal's guard rescued him and locked him up.

There was no way of stopping the Russians, because it's impossible to patrol the whole two miles or so of wire which surrounds the camp, and we feared all night that the Germans would trace the trouble to us. If they had, there's no doubt what the retaliation would have been.

The first big Russian unit hit camp at around 10:00 A.M., when two tanks, an armored half-track, eight self-propelled guns, a dozen truck-drawn antitank and antiaircraft guns and about thirty truckloads of infantry roared to a halt at the gate. I imagine they constituted a sort of assault team, and they lived up in every way to the legend of the Red Army shock troops.

On the first tank, in a cluster of heavily-armed, well-equipped infantrymen who grinned down at the shouting prisoners, sat a fellow with an accordion, singing lustily. On the half-track was a balalaika player and next to him one of the famous "pistol packin' mamas," uniformed like the men and carrying two revolvers and a submachine gun.

Sitting disconsolately among the strapping Russians were a few German prisoners, including the guard who had given me his stamps for safe-keeping. They looked as though they didn't anticipate what was ahead of them.

The Russians leapt from the vehicles and began pumping our hands and slapping us on the back, and the GI's almost wept with joy at the discovery that ninety per cent of their vehicles were American. Within a minute everyone was exchanging compliments in sign language, pidgin English and German and fragmentary Russian picked up from Red Army prisoners.

The Russians reluctantly accepted a few of the cigarettes we tried to press on them, explaining they probably had more than we did—this Red Army certainly looks well cared-for. They began pulling out wine,

beer, vodka and a dozen other varieties of firewater, and everyone within reaching distance had to drink to the Red Army, to Stalin, to Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill, Flying Fortresses, Stormoviks, Eisenhower, Patton, Koniev and everything or everybody else whose name occurred to anyone. The Russians had all heard of Roosevelt's death, and several of them tried to explain how sorry they were.

There is one great difficulty with the Red Army. When it has cause to celebrate, it doesn't go in for half measures. Wine or vodka or brandy is poured out into whatever receptacle is handy, and the receptacle is always filled to the brim. This is all right for healthy men like the Red troops, but it is very hard indeed on war prisoners who have been living on half rations and whose resistance is far below par. A coffee cup full of vodka is quite an undertaking for a man in that condition.

Within ten minutes everyone was agreeing that the war was "*khorosho*"—good—that the Red Army and all other armies are "*khorosho*," and that so are all the air forces, the navies, and the American jeep and army truck, for which the Russians have a huge admiration.

Finally the Russians started up their motors, somebody shouted "Sorry we can't stay; we just wanted to say hello; now we're off for Berlin," and they roared away. As they left, one tank obligingly veered from the street and ran down an entire length of ten-foot barbed wire fence, knocking it flat. The commander shouted from the top in passable German, "You are free now; tear down all the wire for yourselves." It was a magnificent gesture.

Within ten minutes of the departure of the motorized column, every Russian in camp who was able to walk had been mustered into a marching column and started for Luckenwalde. There the healthiest are to be rearmed and sent to the front. The others will be rested and probably used as occupational troops here in the neighborhood. Many are too weak to be moved.

On the way out the gate, several hundred of them stormed the clothing depot, shucked off the miserable rags in which the Germans have kept them, and put on new, warm clothes. They emerged a strange jumble of the uniforms of a dozen nations, but at least their clothing is now clean and decent.

Behind them the Russians left at least 200 men so weak they probably will die. They are still lying in the filth and stench of what the Germans pleased to call the Russian "hospital," a den in the miserable barracks compound where the Red Army prisoners were herded in squalor five times as bad as our own. Lieutenant Colonel David Gold,

the senior American medical officer, who went over to see what he could do for them, said he was afraid they would succumb to advanced tuberculosis, pneumonia, malnutrition or a combination of all three.

The Russians also left behind them eight bodies. Four were men who had died of illness and neglect several days ago, and whom the Germans had not yet gotten around to burying. The other four were badly battered. They were collaborators, and their comrades had taken care of them last night.

In a big percentage of the Russian barracks the men have been sleeping on the brick floors in an indescribable litter. There are several barracks composed of concrete solitary confinement cells with tiny barred windows and walls dripping with moisture. Permeating the whole compound is a stench of decay which turns even a well-inured prison stomach. There is only one barrack room where the smell doesn't seem to penetrate. In this room, the Germans permitted the Russians to construct a chapel out of scrap wood, cardboard and odd lots of paint. Everything, columns, capitals, murals and ikons, was made from trash the Germans couldn't use themselves, and the room is truly beautiful. A steady stream of admiring fellow-prisoners has been filing through it all day.

Colonel Gold and I got some idea this afternoon of why the Russian prisoners needed no urging to take up arms against the Germans once more. We decided to stretch our legs for a half hour or so, and strolled over to the camp cemetery outside the wire. It's a bleak, grassless stretch hewed out of the dull pine woods, and it contains fifty-nine mass graves in which at least 5,000 Russians lie buried. The men of other nations were buried individually under neat mounds. There are thirteen British graves, including one marked "Five British Fliers, names unknown," and five American. Only one of these is marked. It is the grave of a Roger Poterson, who died June 23 of last year.

The Russian mass graves are a horrible commentary on the complete lack of humanity which the Germans habitually showed toward Red Army prisoners. Each is a pit about thirty-five feet long and seven wide, dug to a depth of nine feet. They were filled progressively as new bodies arrived at the cemetery—the rate seems to have been about three per day. The French gravedigger said that each grave took about a month to fill, "although of course in the bad time it was much quicker." The "bad time" was 1942, when 2,400 Russians died of typhus alone in an epidemic which threatened to obliterate the camp.

One of the graves is now only one-third full. The sandy dirt flung over the bodies soon molds itself to their contours, and you need only

count the ribs in the strangely corrugated bottom of the pit to know the number of bodies to the row. Other prisoners were buried naked in rough coffins. The Russians were just thrown in naked, or more recently wrapped in paper.

"They were just skeletons, these poor fellows," said the Frenchman. I asked him if most of them had died from typhus or tuberculosis.

"Or from hunger or beating," he replied. I don't know how much beating went on at Luckenwalde. I do know that we discovered yesterday in a cupboard belonging to the security office a bundle of six-foot lengths of rubber hose and a vicious home-made cat o' nine tails.

So the Russians died, three a day and sometimes more, and their naked bodies were flung into the bottom of a grave, a handful of quicklime was strewn over them, and enough dirt to cover them. And when each grave was finally filled to the brim, layer on layer of unknown victims, an earth cap was patted over it. Then a new grave was begun. And the Russians in the filth of the dens where the Germans herded them kept track of the account and developed a hatred so deep that no Englishman or American can quite grasp it.

Four Russian prisoners were killed this morning when their unarmed column was ambushed from the woods as it marched into Luckenwalde. I would not like to be in the shoes of the Germans whom the Russians are now hunting down in the woods.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 23

THE Russian troops say that the Americans are only a few kilometers away to the west, and coming toward us. Some of them predict their arrival within a few hours. I wish I could believe it. The allied broadcasts indicate that there is no movement from the west on this part of the front, and I assume it is by agreement. Nothing but an inter-allied agreement could stop us at the moment. There are a good many thousand Germans in the vicinity, some of whom certainly are going to fight before giving in, but if the Americans ever got started from around Wittemberg they would be crushed in a few hours. At the moment, I imagine, they are under pressure only from the Russians, and the Russians are interested only in pouring their shock troops into Berlin, leaving the countryside to be mopped up as opportunity offers.

We now have evidence that two days ago, a few hours before the German camp guard finally left, they were still trying desperately to

evacuate the British, Norwegian and American officers, presumably with no purpose beyond keeping us a few days longer under their control. If they had done so we would be adrift in this chaotic battle of extermination, as thousands of other allied prisoners now are.

The camp has been left pretty well alone for the last twenty-four hours, except for a few German civilians who wanted sanctuary, a few German troops who wanted to surrender, and a few hundred slave workers and prison commandos who came here to keep clear of the fighting and were let in. We have had no contact with the outside beyond scattered reports brought in by Frenchmen who had been living in Luckenwalde. These make it clear, however, that both Germans and Russians have cause for complaint in the occupation.

There has been considerable German sniping, not from the local population but from odd lots of German soldiers who had hidden in town and who fired on the Russians from upstairs windows. The Russians, quite rightly, are ruthless with the snipers, and innocent civilians inevitably suffer. Three SS men who had been hiding in the railroad station surrendered to the Russians this afternoon. They identified themselves when they emerged from the door, and were promptly mowed down by a Russian guard with a tommy gun—it's called "blurp gun" around here.

The Russian prisoners who had been ambushed yesterday were furious, and started retaliating on any armed German they could find. They don't ask questions. The Germans never asked them in Russia. They have been ferreting out known Nazis, and disposing of them. They have also combed through town for certain collaborationist prisoners who were supposed to be hiding there.

Late yesterday afternoon, a few Russians got "likkered up" and began prospecting for vodka, women, alarm clocks and other things which appealed to their personal tastes. They did it in a very simple, direct way. They searched peaceably enough, but anyone who protested against the removal of the property in question was very apt to be shot. There is nothing systematic about this sort of thing, as far as we can determine. It is a matter of individual initiative.

The systematic looting in Luckenwalde, and there has been a lot of it, has been done by old prisoners who know the town well and by the slave workers who are beginning to flood through by the thousands after throwing down their work and starting off toward home. The slave workers have lost everything in this war. They have seen their homes destroyed or pre-empted. They have been separated from their families and brought to Germany to work for an enemy machine. They

have lived by black-marketing, gouging, stealing, lying and elbowing their way, and their first reaction is to cut their way back home by the same method. The German civilians are the sufferers—and the logical ones, if sufferers there must be.

The camp has acquired new inmates by the hundreds all day. Some are prisoners who had been farmed out around the countryside. Some are slave laborers. I have identified Dutch, Belgians, French, Italians, Poles, Czechs, Greeks, Serbs and Russians among them. The Russians tell them to come into the camp. When they arrive at the gate they must give up all food they have looted or otherwise accumulated. Our kitchen system here is supposed to care for everyone inside the wire, and nobody is to be permitted to have extra food stocks. The Russians have told us we can forage from the countryside, on the same basis as themselves, but the food problem is going to be serious until the Red Army has had time to set up its supply system. We have already found flour, and potatoes without blemishes which were stored in the camp in large quantities and presumably went to the guards. The Russians drove in about ten cows and calves which will be slaughtered. A bakery is to be reopened during the next day or two in Luckenwalde. But this camp potentially must handle 25,000 French alone, representing the French war prisoners known to be in the vicinity, and nobody can estimate how many slave workers and stragglers from other camps.

The Germans are a bad complication. We have already turned down a delegation headed by the Nazi mayor of Luckenwalde which informed us that the *Volkssturm* had been disbanded, that all army troops had been cleared, and that they would like to surrender the town to the prisoners. We told them that is manifestly impossible, that we in a sense are guests of the Russians and that all we can undertake is to keep ourselves in order. There have been hundreds of German civilians asking admission, and occasionally a group of German soldiers, tired out and hopeless, who offered to give themselves up. We simply can't be put in the position of harboring enemies.

The Russians have been very decent to us. A colonel who visited the camp said he was surprised at the smoothness with which we were organized. He explained that other camps had been hard to handle, and asked that we keep this one under control. He said we were at complete liberty to administer ourselves, that we could forage for German army supplies, and that all the Red Army asked was that we keep the prisoners out of Luckenwalde and avoid interference with military operations.

The Red Army is concentrating right now on smashing resistance in

Berlin. What trouble in town can be laid to the Russians comes not from the front-line troops but from ex-prisoners, a few line-of-supply men and a few stragglers who stop off to investigate the looting possibilities. Every army I have ever seen loots as it goes, and no commander has ever found a way to stop it. The Russians are more direct, more brutal, and more thorough about looting. They loot from everyone, including their friends. They like loot.

It's easy to understand why the Russians want to keep the prisoners in the camp. A German battery last night periodically dumped shells into Luckenwalde. There are more than enough German troops in the vicinity to stage a counter-attack if they manage to organize themselves. Some are discouraged, like the dozen men who came in just before dawn and offered the surrender of eighty to 100 more. Others are in bigger units which have been cut off by the Russian advance but still not badly battered. There are reports of many thousand holding out not far east of here.

Luckenwalde is a war zone in every sense of the word. Until the Russians bring up enough troops to clear out the thousands of Germans still holing up in this area, it will be much better for us to stay where we are. It's a hard thing to ask of men who have just been liberated, but we have no choice.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 24

A FIERCE, no-quarter war between German pockets and mop-up units of Cossacks and infantry is flickering through the pine woods all around here as the main battle line sweeps north on Berlin.

There is heavy artillery, mortar and machine gun fire on all sides of us. Every few hours it flares up into something approaching a small-scale battle, then dies down as another pocket is eliminated and the clean-up again becomes a question of hunting down stragglers in the woods. There are few prisoners in these operations. The Russians pay heavily, for the Germans who choose to resist at all are desperate. It is the sort of blind fighting which has been going on on the eastern front ever since the German onslaught of 1941 first overran the Russian frontier, and no favors are asked on either side.

The Russians eliminated almost to the last man one stubborn unit estimated at 2,000 Germans holed up in a quarry two miles from here by the simple process of firing into the quarry walls with light artillery and letting the flying rock splinters do the work. Yesterday afternoon

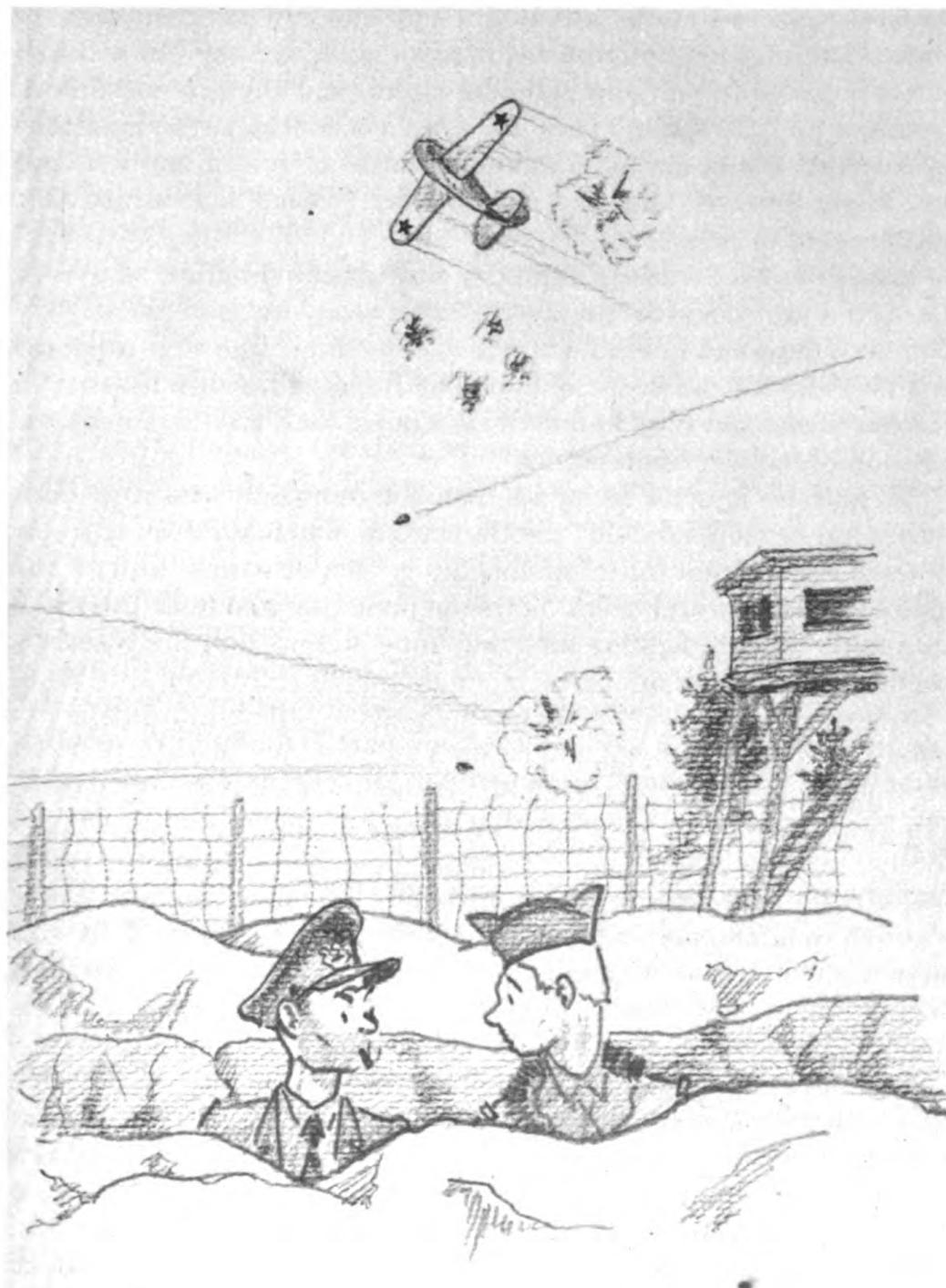
an Italian prisoner reported to a Russian bicyclist the presence of six wounded Hitler Youth boys hiding in a clump of bushes a few hundred yards from the main gate. We had known they were there since morning, when the German women who had been tending their wounds asked us to give them refuge in the camp. The Russian bicyclist disappeared with his rifle into the bushes. There came one shot, which attracted the attention of another Russian in a car. He rushed in with his tommy-gun. We heard one prolonged burst. That was that.

The Russians would be the last people to deny the ferocity of this mop-up warfare, or for that matter the looting and the inevitable casualties in towns overrun by the advance. I got to talking about it tonight with a German-speaking Russian lieutenant who, like all Red Army officers, was neat, clean-shaven and erect. He shrugged his shoulders and said, "we learned that sort of thing from the Germans. They showed us no mercy whatever, and we show them none."

The Red Air Force has been constantly in evidence today—and the American air force, presumably to avoid incidents, have been holding off. Most of the Russian planes we have seen have been Stormoviks, banded together in fours, twelves or eighteens, escorted by American-built Airacobras or by Russian Yak fighters. The Red Air Force obviously is intended for close cooperation with the army, and we have seen no evidence of strategic bombing. The Stormoviks, which are maintaining a shuttle service between advanced fields somewhere near here and Berlin, appear to go into low-level attacks without regard to casualties from ground fire. We have seen several shot down. Like the Red Army, the air force gives the impression of great fighting determination and complete disregard of cost. But the air force to us looks puny beside the great fleets which pulverised Germany from the west. Even the fighting troops of the Red Army have commented to us on that.

The Russian planes have been dividing their attention between targets in the direction of Berlin and the cut-off pockets to the east where a few desperate divisions are trying to cut their way out. The *Luftwaffe* is taking the air against them. It normally avoids dog-fights, but German fighter-bombers are almost always in sight during daylight, wheeling until they reach the proper position and then screaming down to plant their bombs and splatter the crowded roads.

Sooner or later the Russians must turn to the big pocket between here and the Oder, on which there is apparently only minor pressure at the moment. It represents anything up to ten divisions, say 50,000 men in the present state of the *Wehrmacht*, who were isolated by the two



*"I wonder if you'd mind telling me again that we have no more
worries once the Russians arrive?"*

breakthroughs to Cottbus and Berlin and who still have not been in pitched battle. They are probably short of guns, ammunition and fuel but they have not yet been seriously cut-up and they are capable of causing a lot of trouble. They are a big concern to us because they probably are trying to slash a way for themselves toward the west, and they might break through at Luckenwalde. Nobody knows how they might regard us.

Galling as we find the prospect of sitting behind barbed wire with the American lines only twenty-five miles away, we must do so. We have been expecting contact with the liaison officers who were supposed to be with each Russian spearhead. The Russians say they have never heard of them, and it looks now as though we must stay here until the junction of the two fronts occurs.

At that, we're a lot better off than the thousands who have been herded out of their camps by the Germans to march aimlessly north or south in the midst of this chaotic fighting. The Russians, with all the good will in the world, could not be expected to guarantee these columns when they are fighting their way into Berlin. And the Nazis, by their own showing, don't care.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 25

WE HAVE loudspeakers rigged all over camp now, and the entire crowd of us is hanging on for word of the link-up, which we think will mean a quick contact with evacuation officers sent from the American lines. The best bet looks like the Torgau area, although the Russians and Americans might meet first around Berlin.

It seems clear now to us that the link-up was planned for the Elbe river. Either the Americans were ahead of schedule or the Russians behind. At any rate, we secured our bridgeheads on this side only as a base for attack in case the Russian offensive bogged down and the Red Army asked for help. It certainly needs no help at the moment.

The camp is swelling by the hour as isolated groups of prisoners, chiefly French and Italian, march in with carloads of loot, and as the slave workers, male and female, are diverted from the roads by the Russians. The latter are as thoroughly disliked by the Russians as by everyone else. They are a grafting, unscrupulous, unruly mob, and they are becoming a tremendous problem.

The Russians, in fact, recognize only the Americans and British.

for both of whom they have a great deal of respect. They particularly like the Americans, from awe of our industrial machine if for no other reason, and often ask why the Americans are not more in evidence around the camp. In point of fact Americans are doing their full share of the work in running this growing pandemonium, and so are Canadians, Norwegians, French and others, but for one reason or another most of the "front office" jobs seem to have fallen into English hands—so much so that a GI the other day asked whether "we're a goddam colony again."

The truth is that Englishmen have a knack of taking over, blandly and as a matter of course and with no prejudice to the others concerned, all the best positions. If the fact is pointed out to them, they will share the jobs. If it is not, the thought never occurs to them. For my part, they are doing a good job here. But I hate to see the Russians puzzled about the absence of Americans around headquarters.

Thanks to the Russians' authorization for foraging, we are doing well on food. Captain Maynard Files and Lieutenant Amon Carter, Jr., who are in charge of package distribution, have uncovered a huge store of undelivered private parcels at the postal center in Luckenwalde, and are getting them up the hill as fast as possible. They will give us a valuable supplement of food and tobacco. The Russians have restored the electric power, which the Germans cut, and think that the water system, also damaged, will be back in operation tomorrow or the next day.

In short, we are very lucky. The 282 Americans in an *Arbeitskommando* at Wunsdorf, northeast of here, were not. Despite all the German promises to leave prisoners where they were, they were marched off Saturday night toward Potsdam, and have not been heard of since. Nobody has any word of the 188 Americans at Jueterbog. These are just handfuls out of tens of thousands who must be on the roads tonight. The Germans have a lot to answer for in their handling of war prisoners.

Strangely enough, within ten minutes of last night's broadcast announcing the Stalin-Churchill-Truman warning to the Germans on treatment of war prisoners, a German fighter plane swept down on the camp and fired a quick burst, putting three or four twenty millimeter cannon shells into a room where a French refugee woman had just given birth to a baby.

I spent a couple of hours in Luckenwalde this afternoon, and the town is now much quieter—by daylight, at least. The Russian troops are extremely orderly and businesslike. Apparently they are allowed

into town in daylight only on official duty. Most of the few civilians in the streets wear red or white armbands. The red, we understand, represents foreign workers. Those with the white are Germans. Russians say they have discovered a surprising number of Germans who had the courage to remain Communist through twelve years of National Socialism and who have their membership cards to prove it.

There have been an estimated 200 civilian deaths in Luckenwalde since the Russians arrived. Some of these have been court-martial cases. The Russians show no mercy for party functionaries. Some have resulted from looting expeditions by the troops, or have grown out of attempted rape. Some without question can be laid at the door of the slave workers who have avoided going up to the camp and who are bent on stripping the German countryside as their own homelands were stripped by the Germans.

One thing struck me as a sign of the times in Luckenwalde. The town's main street, which needless to say had been called the *Adolf Hitlerstrasse*, has been renamed Joe Gasperich Street by some admirer of the GI sergeant who has been spokesman for the enlisted men in camp. The Red Army doesn't seem to object to the amendment, because the name appears in Russian as well.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 26

GENERAL RUGE, who returned night before last from Marshal Koniev's headquarters and left again today, says it's a mercy that "the farther back you get from the front, the smaller the vodka glasses become."

Ruge is a soldier who commands a great deal of respect in foreign countries for his grim defense of Norway against hopeless odds. The Russians quite naturally were delighted to have liberated him, and wanted to show him every courtesy. He was taken from here to a divisional, a corps, an army and an army group headquarters. At each one there were the inevitable toasts. General Ruge says the vodka at divisional headquarters was poured in water tumblers, and that as the importance of the headquarters increased the farther he went back toward Koniev, the drinks gradually shrank to the normal shot glass size. "I could never have stood it if they hadn't," he says.

The senior officers around here are suffering from the same complaint. The Russians are very cordial toward us, and have thrown two

or three parties at camp headquarters at which the prison commanders are expected to take drink for drink. The kriegie physique just can't stand it.

Unfortunately, despite their extreme cordiality the Russians can give us no answer to the one question in all our minds: when do we go home? General Ruge could find nobody at Marshal Konev's headquarters with authority to make a decision on it, and as far as we can make out the nearest allied liaison officer is in Moscow. Foreign observers have never been permitted to stay on Red Army fronts. The Russians here can tell us only that "Moscow may well decide to send you home via Odessa," a prospect which delights a handful of the travel-minded but looks to the rest of us like a ghastly detour. When we protest that the American lines are only twenty-five miles away, and that we consider it logical to take the shortest road, once it's open, we get that shrugging answer that "Moscow will have to decide, probably as a result of diplomatic negotiations."

Perhaps the linking of the two fronts will bring Americans into this area and enable us to make contact, but if our repatriation is to be handled through diplomatic channels it is going to be a long and tedious business. For a while yesterday I had decided to ask the Russians to take me to Moscow where I could start filing stories to the *United Press*, but I changed my mind when I figured the chances that a trip to Moscow would take many days, and that I'd probably save time by sitting tight.

Sitting tight is very hard, and it's doubly hard on the thousands of prisoners who have been "in" for years. The camp is already very restive. Hundreds of men each day slip out through the wire and filter down into Luckenwalde in search of excitement, and it's impossible for the Provost Marshal's people to halt all of them or round them up once they get there. Once this countryside is a little clearer of Germans, there will be many who simply strike westward and hope they can make the American lines in safety.

At least we have a refuge here, which is more than thousands of other prisoners have. Stalag 43-C, at Teltow, was marched out last Sunday, and presumably is still marching, if it has not been overrun by the battle. A group of thirteen men who were separated from the others on Monday, and subsequently picked up by the Russian advance, arrived here today. They describe conditions near Berlin as chaotic, and think it extremely likely that the 750 men or so in the main group from the camp have gotten into trouble.

The Russians gave these thirteen bicycles and carts, and told them

to come here. They were cordially treated all along the route, even by anxious German civilians. At one point, 125 German soldiers surrendered to them, and they brought them along to Luckenwalde and turned them over to the Russians.

There must be scores of thousands of prisoners of all nationalities who have been caught up in the fighting, and many thousand more who are being herded miserably around behind the German lines, where everything is chaos and despair and where conditions will become even worse once Berlin falls and the German world caves in from all sides. Among these columns is certainly the one from Wunsdorf camp, with 282 men, which had been marched as far as Brandenburg by six days ago. The Germans apparently are trying to get them into the area northwest of Berlin, which will presumably be the last of northern Germany to fall.

This camp is approaching closer to complete pandemonium each day. We are acquiring Italian and Balkan laborers and their women by the hundreds, and we must now represent every blood strain in Europe. The Russians brought in thirty-one Czech boys today. They had been forced to work in war factories near Breslau. During the Russian winter offensive they were forced into the *Reichs Arbeitsdienst*, Hitler's labor service. They have been working on trenches near Jueterbog, and when the Germans demanded they take arms and fight, they deserted. They said that several other Czech units, unable to get away, had been wiped out in the fighting.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 27

THE French say that one of their companions, who worked for the resistance movement even while a prisoner, succeeded two weeks ago in smuggling M. Herriot, the former premier and the Germans' prize French prisoner, out of his cell somewhere near Berlin, brought him to Luckenwalde, kept him in hiding until the Russians arrived and has finally gotten him safely off by plane to Moscow. It sounds like one of the better underground stories.

Scattered German remnants are striking savagely at the Russian lines of communications near here, and there is still a serious possibility of the fighting flaring up around the camp. The Red Army wiped up one pocket of 1,200 at Baruth, thirteen miles east of here, yesterday, but another battle group about 6,000 strong and much better armed

succeeded in cutting the important north-south road between Baruth and Zossen, near Berlin. There are a good many thousand other Germans lying quietly in the woods in this vicinity, waiting for a chance to strike west, and the chances of any prisoner's making the American lines are not good. Despite this, a few prisoners "take off" each day, preferring the risk to more sitting around in suspense.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 28

NEWS that a jeep-load of American correspondents had passed through toward Berlin last night started a spate of rumors, best of which was that the Yankee Division had gone through town. At least it raises the hope that there will be some sort of official contact soon with the authorities in charge of prisoner evacuation.

The story has it that Colonel Lutter was caught and given a drum-head court martial. When he admitted being commandant of Luckenwalde, he was ordered shot. He was told no defense was possible after such an admission. We know that Hauptmann Braune, the security officer, is at work shovelling coal down in Luckenwalde town. The latter item is giving everyone extreme pleasure.

The radio today carried the report that Himmler had offered unconditional surrender to Britain and America, not Russia. While it's very significant that the fanatical Nazis themselves have lost hope, it's amazing that they should still be trying to split the allies. They just can't get the fact of our united front through their heads.

A Russian captain brought in fifty truckloads of food and clothing today, and is to be in charge of evacuation, when and if it comes. The trouble, he says, is the German resistance pockets. The remnant east of here was finally wiped up yesterday evening, with a total of 14,000 prisoners, but it is only one of many, and all must be cleaned out. There is heavy firing to the west of us today.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 29

AMERICANS are very popular people in these parts nowadays—with the Russians, who know how important American food, weapons and transport have been to them, and with the German soldiers and civil-

ians, who wish for nothing more fervently than capture by the Americans.

The British are close runners-up, but the British have no General Patton.

The first night the Russians were in possession of Luckenwalde a patrol of American officers went into town to round up any stray GI's who might be wandering around. The senior officers wanted to avoid any incidents, and particularly to steer clear of implication in the looting by all and sundry.

One of the officers in the patrol is tall and rather hawk-featured. He was somewhat startled when a very frightened German popped out of a black alleyway and inquired hopefully, "General Patton?"

We had long been aware that even the Germans, who suffered from it, admired the speed with which American armored spearheads—particularly General Patton's—moved. The admiration has if anything increased since those same spearheads cut the Reich to ribbons and turned inevitable defeat into appalling national catastrophe. We didn't realize what a fervent hope the German was registering in his recognition of "Patton" until a couple of days later, when the number of Germans who wanted to surrender to us began to become embarrassing.

Even before the German departure, certain guards had tried to make arrangements with prisoners to stay in the compounds, and had been summarily rejected. Once the Russians arrived, civilians by twos, sixes and dozens began drifting up to the camp to ask shelter. Then came the troops, singly or in little groups, slipping fearfully out of the woods and asking to be taken in. All were refused.

Foraging parties from camp, out on the search for food, have been asked time and again by groups of Germans whether they couldn't surrender. Prisoners who were unable to stand the strain of waiting for what is now called "liberation from the Russians" and who had struck out on their own toward the west have run into the same story. One of them was following the railway line when he ran into 200 fully armed goons building a block. They pointedly suggested he might like to return—fast—to Luckenwalde, taking them with him. When he refused, they told him to return by himself and leave them alone. The Germans have been so propagandized on the subject of Russian atrocities that they will do almost anything to avoid capture. There is no doubt that a great proportion of those still holding out around here are doing so in the hope of cutting through to the Americans before they are picked up.

An R.A.F. officer who is a bird watcher by avocation was out in the

woods yesterday looking for birds and suddenly discovered he was surrounded by fifty extremely belligerent-looking Germans. The Germans seemed about to riddle him, and he called out that he was a British officer. Blessed relief spread over the fifty faces, all guns were thrown down, and the senior German announced, "that's fine, now we're your prisoners."

"Look here, old chap," said the Britisher, "it's very embarrassing you know, because I'm really a sort of guest of the Russians."

The Germans admitted his point, then asked if he could at least tell them how far they'd have to walk to reach the American lines. He told them, they picked up their guns, and moved off in the indicated line.

The Russians are well able to handle these parties long before they reach the Americans. In most cases, the camp authorities inform the Red Army of the direction they have taken.

Inside the camp, life has improved with slightly better food from German army stores located near here, and with such attractions as open-air loudspeakers broadcasting allied radio programs with swing music, ball scores and topline "name" features. But this does not alter the fact that, although "liberated," we are still behind barbed wire, and the strain on the slightly off-center mentality of the prisoner is dangerous. Many men have already gone "over the hill," and the movement will reach big proportions unless something can be done to give these men tangible benefits of freedom. Just one American from outside who showed himself and promised help might be enough.

You can't expect a man who has been a prisoner for anything from two to five years to possess himself in patience behind the wire while the Russians talk of referring things to Moscow, of sea trips home from Odessa, and the like.

The food situation, while it is all right at the moment, is bound to get worse. The Russians agree to our foraging from the countryside, just as they do themselves—every Russian horse-drawn column has its herd of cows, and its chickens and pigs slung into the backs of the wagons. They even had pigs and cows driven in for us. We force all refugees reaching the camp to give up their food for the common pot. The Russians have gotten local bakeries to working, but the demand is so great that they can do no more than supply ten pfennigs worth—three or four slices—daily to the population and the swarming hordes of "displaced persons." The Red Army and the refugee thousands between them are eating the countryside bare. There are no crops going into the ground, and no labor to tend them if they did. The Lucken-

walde area is ripe for starvation, and unless something is done the time will be soon.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
APRIL 30

THE Red Army today began a "goon hunt" throughout the area, with everything from sub-machine guns to medium artillery joining in. The fighting has been very heavy, and for a time it was reported that enough German groups had banded together to make a coordinated counter-attack. The Russians in town were definitely jittery at the prospect of trouble, and brought in tanks in case of emergency.

The best bet is that while the woods are full of Germans, most of them are hungry and discouraged and interested only in fighting their way westward, avoiding capture as long as possible. The Russians have now "thickened up" enough on the ground to make the clean-up just a matter of time.

The "over the hill" movement is growing fast, but it is still a very risky business to travel, even by daylight, unless you have transport. We have none. Two would-be escapees got fifteen kilometers yesterday before they ran into fifty SS troops who at first wanted to take them along as hostages, but finally agreed to let them return here, minus their cigarettes and chocolate.

The Russians are planning to move the British, Norwegian and American contingents to the *Adolf Hitler Lager*, a sumptuous officers' rest home five miles south of here which is beautifully equipped, down to movie theaters, swimming pools, and landscaped lawns, and where we would be very comfortable. The bad feature, of course, is the implication that the Russians think we will be around here long enough to make such a move worth-while. There is a very large airdrome with permanent runways at Jueterbog, under ten miles from here, and we can't understand why an air evacuation can't be arranged. A fleet of C 47 transport planes could evacuate us all in a couple of days.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
MAY 1

THERE has been much mortar and artillery fire, and some movement of tanks, all day. Apparently there is a big group of Germans trying to push west from directly east of us, and the Russians are methodically

chewing them to pieces. It looked for a while as though the Russians might have to get out of Luckenwalde, but they beat off the most serious threat and are in complete control of the situation. At that the fighting got close enough for a mortar shell to land in the sport field this afternoon, much to the consternation of thousands of prisoners whose nerves are taut and whose emotions zig-zag madly all day from gloom to hysterical optimism.

There probably are close to 50,000 men in this German battle group, and they might prove dangerous in their desperation, but they are cold, hungry, ragged and badly armed, and the Red Army will no doubt handle them effectively.

A scouting party went over to the *Adolf Hitler Lager*, which has been nicknamed "Joe's Place" in honor of Generalissimo Stalin, and reports that the space available to us in the big modern buildings has been cut in half, that the horde of slave workers sent there by the Russians has engulfed everything, that they have destroyed what they couldn't steal, and that they even went so far as to rip mattresses apart, throw furniture out the windows, and befoul floors, walls and ceilings when they were told they must vacate quarters for us. Many thousands of dollars worth of movie equipment was smashed to bits for sake of the lenses, which are valuable and easy to carry off. The whole place is a shambles now, and the 1,400 Americans under Colonel Oakes who made up the advance party are hopelessly outnumbered by the thousands of Italians and French, who started a free-for-all when they were asked to vacate the premises allocated to us. The French were the worst offenders.

Having lived a long time in Europe, I think I can understand the state of mind of these French prisoners and slave workers who are now able to hold their heads up once more. Years of prison or forced labor have turned a lot of them into gouging, thieving opportunists, and they have a chance to get their own back a bit for the things they and their country went through. They are not normal, and they won't be normal for a long time. On top of the national demoralization of 1940 has come the personal demoralization of life as a prisoner. But refusal to share and share with other people in the same fix is regrettable, to use a mild word, and as far as the average American or Englishman in this camp is concerned, the French are definitely no good. One senior officer exploded today, "My God, they act as though they did us a favor to let us come and liberate their country."

Colonel Oakes just sent over a message from "Joe's Place" which ranks in my mind as one of the minor classics of the war. It reads:

"One infection, some bronchitis, one head wound and bruised shoulder due to blunt instrument in hands of French. These jerks are armed so may have some interesting gunshot wounds soon. Will hold sick call in A.M. Send pill roller or aid man. Also one aspirin for me.
Oakes, Lt. Col."

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
MAY 2

HITLER is dead—a fact which needs no further comment.

I think that most people who, like myself, have had good cause to study the man over the past ten years, would agree that it was in perfect keeping with his strange, mystic fanaticism that he die in the ruins of his monstrous creation—not seek refuge in anonymous hiding where he would be just another fugitive from the justice of mankind. I have always thought he would put a bullet through his head at the last moment, and that he would leave as a legacy to underground Germany a political testament justifying his sorry regime and exhorting to a future bid for mastery.

Perhaps he did. The announcement gives no details beyond the fact of death "at the head of his troops." I don't think Hitler died in combat. I think this twisted Siegfried more probably took his own life in the shambles of his chancellory as the Russians smashed the last defense works of Berlin.

A lot of Germans won't agree. There are many thousand, certainly, who think he died in the bomb attempt last July, and that Himmler and Goebbels held the Reich together thereafter. Perhaps it's unimportant. The important thing is that they don't care very much when he died. Hitler is a discredited man, discredited not because he was the sort of man he was, because he gave birth to atrocities which stagger a normal mind, but because he didn't win.

Everyone is speculating why Doenitz' announcement made no mention of Goebbels or Himmler. Are they dead, or have they been forced out for being too conciliatory toward the Allies, or too intransigent? Is Doenitz, as he says, the leader of a fight-to-the-death movement or is he head of the long-predicted military regime which will try to hold together the chaos which remains of the Third Reich? The fact that Doenitz, by all evidence, is a fanatical Nazi would argue against his being a peace-maker. But how anyone, even a fanatical Nazi, can conceive of resistance *aboveground* lasting more than a few weeks, is be-

yond comprehension. The south is gone, the west and east are gone, the capital is gone, and central Germany has been hashed to bits. Further resistance could only gain a few more days for the underground movement to establish itself.

Resistance around here has reached a high-pitch climax. There has been artillery fire all day, and a lot of small-arms shooting. Russian tanks have been in action east of Luckenwalde, and there are machine guns in position on many street corners in the town. The Russians undoubtedly will handle the situation, but things are serious enough at the moment to force the withdrawal of our patrol from the town. The German pocket, at terrible cost, has succeeded in forcing its way a few bloody miles toward the west. It probably is a death flurry, but it has us all pretty jumpy.

It seemed fitting to me that on the day Hitler's death was announced I should hear a story which tops most atrocity tales. It is the story of four Polish girls—nameless, because theirs is the nameless tale of millions who were put under Hitler's yoke.

The girls are Jews, part of the estimated 200,000 who remain of Poland's 3,500,000. They were all fourteen years old when they were caught up by the Nazi dragnet, but since then they have lived a thousand years of fear.

For five years they were worked in a munitions factory at Radom, whose Jewish population of 30,000 shrank to 2,000 as successive deportations into limbo drained it away. Last September they were taken to Oswiecim, or Auschwitz, in Upper Silesia, a huge complex of terror camps which they say contained an average of 1,000,000 people, about half of them Jews.

The girls sewed or knitted as they spoke, more to keep their hands from twisting than for any other reason. They had only rags to sew on, and only two small balls of knitting yarn which couldn't possibly become anything useful.

"Oswiecim was a concentration camp, internment camp and extermination camp all in one," they said. "Day and night the smoke poured from the charnel houses. Anyone who looked ill disappeared into it. We think over 5,000,000 people must have been killed there during the war."

At Oswiecim the girls were stripped, all hair was shaved from their bodies, serial numbers were tattooed on their left forearms, and they were given injections which certainly have sterilized them temporarily and may have done so for life. They were given pajamas and clogs to wear. They did not work. The Germans forced the inmates through

constant roll calls. When the count was off, which was frequently, because a few prisoners were lucky enough to die in their barracks, there was a "punishment roll call" in which all inmates knelt in the cold for hours on the cobblestones of the camp street, arms held above the head. They got a half pint of watery soup and three slices of bread per day. Treatment was so bad that one woman who had stolen a piece of bread threw herself against the electrified barbed wire rather than face the punishment.

They spent five weeks in the camp. Then one day thousands of women were stripped naked and lined up in the camp street for inspection by German labor officials who picked out the healthiest like so many horses, gave them minimum clothing, and packed them into cattle cars. They were taken to a factory near Hanover, where they worked at powder filling. The food here was a little better, and they even met kindness from a German foreman who did the most dangerous jobs himself. He was the only decent German they ever met.

A month later they were sent to another camp, where they slept twelve to a horse stall and where conditions were so bad that many women committed suicide. Then they were sent to Elsen, near Torgau, where they were jammed in big tents on damp straw in mid-winter. Here they made *Panzerfausts*. The quota of their unit was 4,500 a day, which was a physical impossibility most days because materials were so short, and every time they fell below the quota their ration was cut and they were beaten. The soup ration was water. The thicker portion at the bottom of the cooking pot was reserved for the camp pigs.

When one girl accidentally broke a pane in the kitchen serving hatch, her entire tent was denied rations and the women were forced to bend over and receive twenty-five lashes from a certain Voelker, a *Scharfuehrer* in the SS. Voelker was aided by SS women guards who always carried cats o' nine tails.

When the Americans approached Torgau the women were loaded, sixty to a car, into cattle trucks. On a siding near Berlin, where their engine broke down, they were kept for eight days without food or water, and with only five minutes outside the cars each day. Their train lay between an ammunition train and a line of gasoline tank cars. Then the bombers came. These four girls were the only survivors from their car. They count over 500 of the original 750 as dead.

The survivors escaped to the woods, and the Nazis hunted them down with dogs. The girls think the only survivors were forty young women who made their way to an Italian labor camp and were hidden

by the Italians, who fed them and dressed their wounds and finally brought them here.

I gave them some cigarettes and soap, and when the Polish doctor pulled from his pocket a little package of the livid face powder which German men use after shaving, I remarked it was hardly a necessity but might have some morale-lifting value.

"Don't say that," said one of the girls. "It was a necessity at Oswiecim. We used to paint and powder every day as though we had a date—even trade our food for the cosmetics. Those who looked ill, you know, went to the gas chamber."

The Russians say Berlin capitulated this afternoon. The end is just about here.

Stalag III-A, Luckenwalde
MAY 3

GAY Russian troops streamed westward along the road past camp late yesterday evening and this morning, shouting to us that they were going to meet the Americans, thirty miles or so from here. They were in celebrating mood, because they had just finished liquidating the pocket to the east.

They said 40,000 prisoners had been taken, and it may well be true. At least 1,000 have passed through Luckenwalde, and 5,000 were herded south under guard of two Russians. They were the tiredest, most hungry, most dispirited bunch of prisoners I have ever seen. I wish that officer at Strasbourg who bawled at the Americans for sloppiness could be among them.

Colonel Oakes and his battalion returned today from "Joe's Place," reporting that conditions were hopeless. That and the fact that the countryside finally has been pretty well cleaned up decided the senior officers to take the initiative in getting us evacuated from here instead of waiting for the Russians to do something about it. A couple of parties are to start out tonight, and tomorrow I am going to try to strike toward Wittemberg from Luckenwalde, hoping for a lift. If I can get through, I am to try to get action from Supreme Headquarters.

Something must be done or the whole camp will disintegrate. Of the 4,894 Americans who were here on "L-Day," 23 officers and 119 men have disappeared, not counting a large percentage of the 1,400 men Colonel Oakes took with him to "Joe's Place." The percentage is probably higher with some of the other nationalities, particularly the British from Dunkirk, who have had nearly five years of prison and are

going mad at the delay. It might be better if the entire camp tried to percolate through to the Americans, several hundred a day, but there is good evidence that a lot of those who attempted it hitherto have been killed or thrown into jail.

Newt Lantron has gotten hold of a chicken for dinner, and it will be a good farewell party as far as I am concerned. Newt wants to come along, but is bound by Colonel Herte's order to obey General Eisenhower's "stay put" instructions.

Eight P.M. The chicken dinner was interrupted by news that Robert Vermillion, of *United Press* had arrived in a jeep to take me out. Word of my whereabouts had gotten through, and he came in to look for me. Bob is with Lou Azrael of the *Baltimore News Post*. They are going to spend the night here and then drive out at dawn with me and Arthur Bergfjord, who has reports for the Norwegian authorities. I have given away what food I had left, and have downed a few farewell brandies with Henri de Vilmorin, who dug up a bottle for the occasion. I am to take out the rolls of the British, Norwegians and Americans, and detailed reports for the French.

I am much too excited to write anything more. . . .

Paris
MAY 4

FROM limbo to luxury in thirteen hours. . . .

The transition is so tremendous that I probably won't be coherent in this last entry in the prison log.

At 6:00 A.M. today I was still in the dreary expanse of wind-whipped sand in which we spent the last three hungry, verminous months. I was still one of the thousands who for the past twelve days have been going frantic at the "liberation" which kept them, to all intents and purposes, still prisoners—free men unable to taste freedom.

At 7:00 P.M. I was celebrating liberation in champagne cocktails in Paris with a half dozen old friends. I have had a hot bath in a real bathtub. I have given my prison uniform to the maid to be burned, and have borrowed a completely clean uniform, with no lice. I have had three good American meals in one day, after months of the starvation rations which the Germans chose to give their prisoners.

I am free, and in a day or two Europe is going to be finally free as well—free for a future which is uncertain, but free at least of the terrible fear which Hitler brought to the world.

Bob Vermillion and Lou Azrael circulated last night through every barrack and tent in camp, talking with the men, telling them they were not forgotten, and thereby did a lot to raise the dismal morale. I don't remember what I did all evening, except that I shook hands with a couple of hundred people and assured them I'd do everything I could to get them out immediately.

When we got into the jeep this morning after a few hours' sleep, we found it crammed with notes—under the windshield wiper, under the cushions, in the tin hats, in Bob's canteen cover, in every crack and corner—just little notes from men who wanted to tell their families, "I'm all right. See you soon. Love." There were hundreds of notes, and several hundred more letters which we had been given to carry out. Every last one will be mailed, and every last cable I promised will be sent.

We left while the camp still slept. We passed the gate without difficulty, although the Russians now have a guard there to examine the passes. I was sitting on a cushion into which the rolls of names were sewn. That, at least, we were determined to get through.

There was no trouble whatever; We went down the road at full speed past the empty German fields, which should now be sprouting, through the silent woods, past the burned-out tanks and trucks and the abandoned guns. When the Red Army men saluted us, we saluted them in return, when they waved, we waved. Looking back, nobody would have thought of stopping us. We were Americans, and friends. Even Arthur Bergfjord had hidden his Norwegian naval uniform under a GI overcoat. He carried the upper plate radio set in his pocket.

Just beyond Wittemberg we passed into the American zone, and I saw my first fighting GI since September 12. The countryside seemed happier. If anything could be called happy in this national debacle which is Germany. Five minutes later we had scrounged a breakfast of grapefruit juice, pancakes, bacon and coffee from a GI chuck wagon.

Funny, but the first American-held town we ran through is under the command of the lieutenant, Sam, his first name is, who arranged the surrender of the 20,000 Germans at Chatillon and thereby started me off to prison camp.

Three hours later I was on a plane which left Magdeburg, skimmed low over the unsavory clearing of Buchenwald, touched down at Weimar, Nurenberg and Regensburg and then headed for Paris. It was a typical Air Transport Command shuttle plane at the start. Gradually the original passengers got out, and at each stop two or three dirty, disreputable characters like myself boarded the plane.

They were prisoners who had "liberated themselves" from various camps and were heading west—and home.

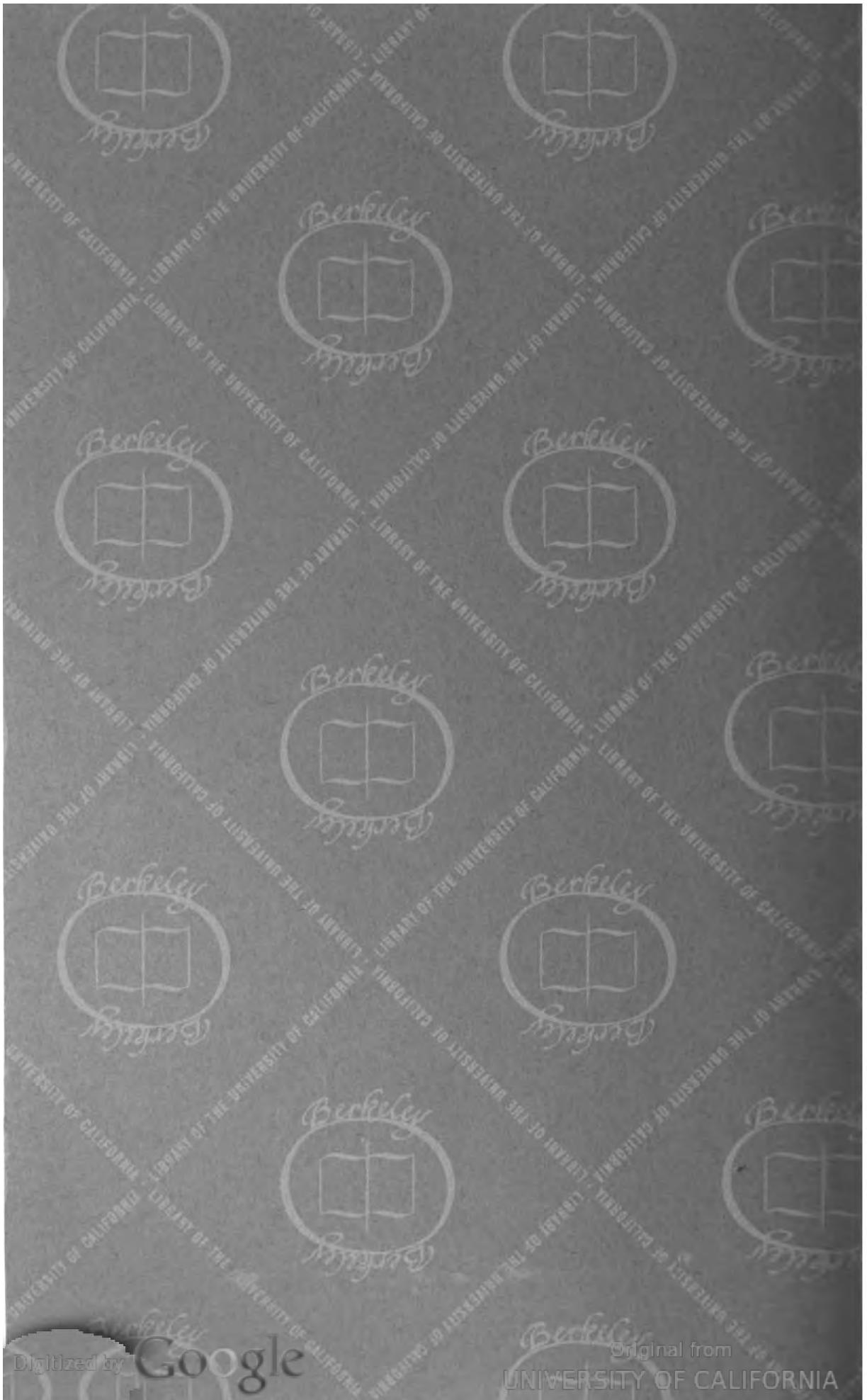
There were a remarkably large number of bottles on the plane. Every liberated kriegie acquires a bottle, somehow, it seems. There were three army nurses off to Paris on leave who were our best sight in many months. There was, even later, as we bored through the dusk and finally raised the lights of Paris' great boulevards, a double quartette, a cossack dance or two up the long corrugated aisle and two ex-kriegies who went quietly, but blissfully to sleep.

My hotel bed has a thick, soft mattress, and sheets. . . .



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